WHIPLASH SMILE

NO.5

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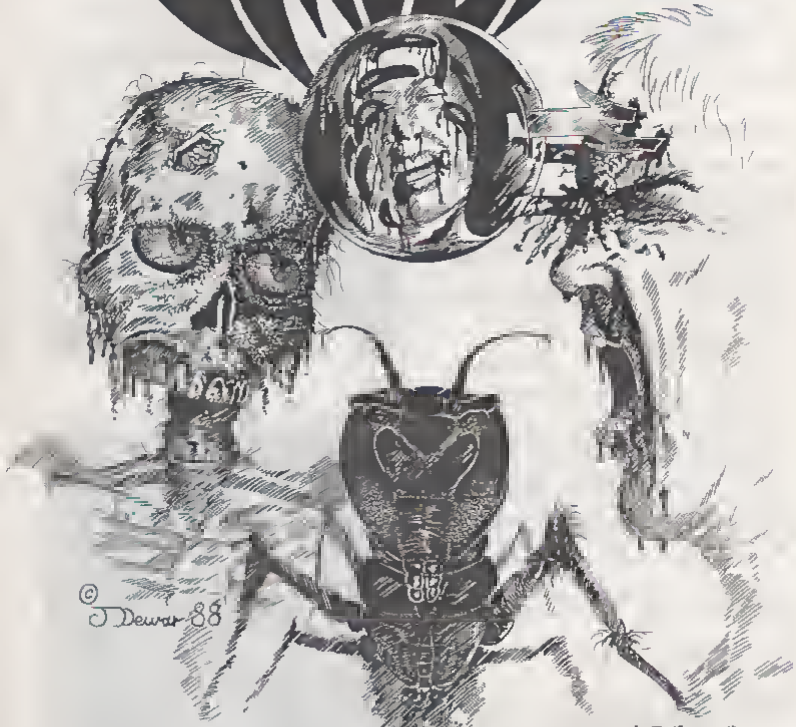

THE MAGAZINE OF MONSTERS & MAYHEM!

INCLUDES

EXCLUSIVE DENNIS HOPPER INTERVIEW; DAN CURTIS PROFILED; SHOCK AROUND CLOCK REPORT.
OVER 40 GENRE REVIEWS FEATURING: RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 2; SLUGS THE MOVIE;
PHANTASM II; THE HIDDEN & CODLES MORE BESIDES!
PLUS ALL THE USUAL NEWS, VIEWS, ARTICLES, COMMENT AND CRITIQUE.....

ISSUE 5, AUTUMN - WINTER 1988.

WHIPLASH SMILE is a quarterly publication by, JOHN HILL, 29 SKIRBECK ROAD, BOSTON, LINCS, PE21 6DA.

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BACK ISSUES are available priced £1 each, which includes P&P, foreign customers should double that.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are £4 per year, and covers the the next 4 issues.

CONTRIBUTIONS, are welcomed, please enclose SAE if you want work returned. All contributors, receive free issues and countless free perks...so C'mon, send something in?

FOREIGN ORDERS, please DO NOT send foreign cheques, we only accept foreign currency, and International money orders (or UK funds).

ARTIST FOR HIRE!

You can't help but have noticed the exceptional artwork which has graced the last two covers of W.S. The artist who was kind enough to donate these works was Jonathan Dewar, a local freelance artist, who is now asking any potentialpersons interested in his work to contact him, in view of commisions.
Jonathan can be found at:
544 BROADGATE, WESTON HILLS, SPALDING, LINCS, PE12 6DP. Tel SPALDING 60156.

I hope this does some good mate.
Just as long as you don't dump us, I'm sure the readers would be relectant to go back to my grotty sketches?

▲ 'RAT PFINK A BOO BOO' PAGE 8.

▼ 'RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 2 PAGE 28.

VIEW FROM THE HILL

SINCE 'Whiplash Smile' 4 came out in the beginning of June, an awful lot has been happening here, and it seemed, during those long cold, wet, Summer days that the zine would'nt be carrying on, without boring you with too many details, I'll just say that I had other concerns at the time. I no longer had the impetus, time, and most importantly, the money to continue publishing, so it seemed it was all over, I went into near hibernation, I stopped answering mail, and even wrote to various persons stating the zine was dead.

However, things can change, and gradually I felt the urge to start up again, and it all culminated about a month back when I decided 'Whiplash Smile' was too much of a good thing to just let slip away without trace. I wrote to various friends and contacts and asked their opinions, the overwhelming response was to carry on. One obstacle still remained, and that was the money, as to continue the zine in its printed format would alas be financially impossible. Therefore the only viable alternative was to photocopy the mag, and in this department can I express my extreme gratitude to Simon Miles, thanks ants, you've proved a real life-saver. Now unfortunately this will mean a drop in the quality of printing, but I see no reason why this should ruin the zine, as I've made every effort to improve the actual contents, and surely it is what is been written that is important, not how pretty it looks? Granted, the superior printing of the past W.S's was a great asset, and made for a more professional appearance, but I just can't maintain the prices such quality calls for.

Well that's the bad news, the good news is that now we are definitely back in business, I see no reason why we can't knock out a few extra issues a year, or failing that, knock up the page count? You'll see the mag has a new catch-phrase -"The magazine of monsters and mayhem!" which reflects the areas I want to take the zine. From this issue on I want to extend the coverage to include science-fiction and fantasy, aswell as general exploitation and even action and thrillers, in fact anything that I feel will appeal to the readership of the publication, though don't worry, for horror will still provide a good 90% of the material covered. I've a good few new features that will start to creep into the mag over the next few issues, though don't worry as the old favourites will remain. I've extended the reviews section quite a bit, and have made an effort to include as many new and especially forthcoming films as possible, and have thrown in a few past obscurities also, to give a good variety of material, and in future I'll make an effort to include yet more obscurities. I know the sorts of films I want covering, and will indeed soon be starting a section on old monster movies, aswell as giving coverage on classic exploitation films and film-makers like H.G.Lewis; Andy Milligan; Russ Meyer; John Waters; Larry Buchanan; Ray Dennis Steckler and the like as this is where my personal preferances lie. However, more than ever now I want your opinions on what you want to see, as your opinions are important. I'll also be setting out to give more reader participation, with more competitions, and more incentives to contribute. And if all goes well, I hope to be including an interview with a famous name from the film-world in each upcoming issue, all this aswell as such favourites as 'Crypt of Terror'; 'The Splatter Spot'; 'Severed Segments'; 'The Whiplash Smile Profile' plus all the usual reviews and comment from the usual team of writers and artists.

I now feel confident that the fanzine can continue without hiccups for a good time now, and hey, did you know that during all the trouble and confusion between this issue and the last one, that we've passed our first anniversary of publishing, yes we are now one year old, and if you look at the differances between this and the very first issue, you'll see just how much we've improved.

Now all I can do is sit back and hope that you the reader can live with these new changes, which let's face it, are'nt all that desperate. However, having said that, if any subscribers wish for their money to be refunded I'll understand, and will indeed return your remittance, though I hope no-one resorts to such a drastic stance. I'm hoping everyone will not only adjust to the new look but will write in with their opinions and hopefully support, as the comments and contributions of the readership is what keeps amateur publications such as this one going, and I sincerely hope that you, like me, feel 'Whiplash Smile' is too much of a good thing to let slip away.

What with so much of our beloved genre being outlawed and disappearing, the last thing I want to see is this magazine follow them.

And on that note, I'll end this editorial, and let you get on with the rest of the issue, and please folks, let us know what you think?

JOHN HILL (EDITOR).

WHIPLASH MAIL.

write to JOHN HILL 29 SKIRBECK ROAD, BOSTON LINCS PE21 6DA

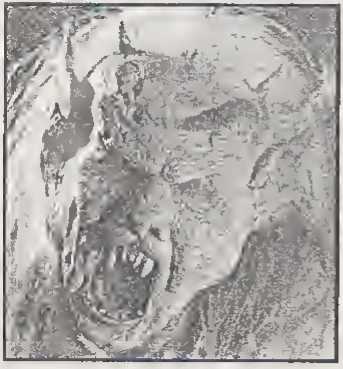
Hi John,

Thank for #,S 4, as good as ever, only a few minor points to nit-pick at In the LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT review, I a sure I said it is understandable why the censors took offence to this one (although UN-condonable)" at least that's what I meant, and secondly, let's have more fran Richard Griffithe as not only is Crypt of Terror' the best feature of W.S. but this one has good taste.. I'd alas like to take this opportunity to thank Craig Ledbetter for his nice comments (to the Nanahrcs are on the way Craig-honest!).
That's all for now, keep up the good work!
Paul Sand
Somewhere in Wales...

THANKS PAUL, AND I STAND CORRECTED ON THE 'LAST HOUSE' TYPO, I'M SURE IT WAS ONE OF MINE! LISTEN, WHAT IS THIS MUTUAL APPRECIATION BETWEEN YOU AND GRIFFITHS? YOU'RE BOTH CONSTANTLY WRITING IN PRAISE OF EACH OTHER, I'M BEGINNING TO HAVE MY SUSPICIONS YOU KNOW!

Dear John,

what can I say except that issue 4 of WHIPLASH SMILE was outstanding. You comprehensively covered the subject, and intelligently to boot. Just keep up the good work, it pays other as called professional eaga to shame.
Hope you aever Shock around the clock' next issue i amlent bank it, though I've seen some of the films that were shown I recently saw THE UNNAMABLE on video. The teenagers in peril story was helped by humour and 'meatier' than average fx. As I correct in thinking MANIAC COP was also shown? Anyway, i thought this had potential, but was ruined by slack direction, new of Glickenhaus had directed instead of Bill Lustig then things may have been different
Thanks also for running my ad in the last issue. i new have seen of ten titles I was looking for, i'm still desperately after a copy of THE ISLAND though. You wouldn't think that such a mainstream film would be so unobtainable?
A point I'd like to raise as a Lunic Fulci fan, is your comment that NEW YORK RIPPER is his best picture, I really do beg to differ on this. Any credibility as a thriller that it musters during its ninety or so minutes is to ea, at least, lost due to its appalling attitude towards women. The fx though nothing special are nasty more by nature. The death scenes are prolonged far beyond good taste, i'm no prude, but this film disturbed me and left me with an unpleasant taste in my mouth. Lucio must really have hated women who put this one together For me his best is THE BEYOND, but it's really just a matter of opinion isn'nt it?



Finally, please tell me, is Elmer Pudpucker the guy's real name? Cmon it can't really be (And before anyone says what about yours, well mine's French, going back 500 years!)
All the best,
Roger Cronin,
Sidcup, Kent.

AS YOU'LL SEE ROGER WE HAVE INDEED COVERED SHOCK AROUND THE CLOCK THIS ISSUE, AND IF YOU THOUGHT THE UNNAMABLE HAD 'MEATY' EFFECTS, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN NEKROMANTIK !
OTHER READERS TAKE NOTE OF ROGER'S COMMENTS, AND SEE THE 'HORROR MARKET SWAPS/FOR SALE COLUMN REALLY DOES WORK, AND IT'S FREE!
GOOD POINT ON THE FULCI MOVIE, THOUGH I STILL MAINTAIN, PLOT-WISE IT'S HIS BEST, OBVIOUSLY YOU VE NEVER SEEN THE FULL VERSION OF THE BEYOND' IF YOU CONSIDER THE COMPARAMLY MILD NY RIPPER TO BE FAR BEYOND GOOD TASTE, BUT EACH TO HIS OWN AS YOU SO RIGHTLY POINT OUT
FINALLY, ALL OF COURSE ELMER PUDPUCKER IS HIS REAL NAME DO YOU THINK ANYONE COULD INVENT A FALSE ONE THAT RIDICULOUS AND ABOUT YOUR OWN NAME, IT'S NOT AS TRUE AS YOU MAY THINK AS OUR NEXT LETTER PROVES

Dear John,

I have read a couple of issues of your fanzine that my brother subscribes to, and I have to admit they make for an interesting read. Apart from the articles and reviews, the letters and your editorial comments must be the most interesting items I love finding out what other people think and feel about the horror genre especially as everybody seems to have different preferences and tastes. Myself, I am geared more towards literary horror and get Gareth Jones Picase of 'Mary' which I enjoy It appears though that a lot of your readers prefer the so-called meatier to the film area, but time again an hour and a half of cinematic mayhem and dismemberment never hurt anyone did it? 'Whiplash Smile' seems to attract a predominately male audience but I suppose most females are more into dancing round their bandbags at discos, and such pursuits, as it's only to be expected.
The main reason I'm writing is that I want to run an ad in your zine if at all possible I want to start up my own dark fantasy fanzine (yes, I know, trés pretentious) and thought running an ad for contributors in W.S. would be a good place to start. It'd be solely dedicated to short horror fiction interspersed with artwork and it's something I've been considering doing for a while, as i write plenty of this sort of thing myself Obviously the competition is fierce, but in the fanzine stoma i like to think (says the viewing the whole thing through rose-tinted spectacles) that everybody helps everybody else out, and people are content to do their own thing, without slagging each other off, Stefan Jawartyn exclaimed.
Hopefully I'll be inundated with material that i can put together is some form or another- optimistic are'nt I?
All the best with future issues
Pamela Cronin,
Sidcup, Kent.

MANY THANKS FOR THE LETTER PAMELA, IT'S TRULY NICE TO KNOW THERE ARE FEMALE FRIGHT FANS OUT THERE, AND YES, IT IS TRUE THAT W.S. HAS A PREDOMINANTLY MALE READERSHIP, THOUGH THOUGH NO FAULT OF MINE I HOPE IT WOULD SEEM THE LADIES JUST AREN'T INTO THIS STUFF, WHICH IS A SAD FACT, AND I SHOULD KNOW, I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR A FEMALE HORROR NUT, WHO IS ALSO INTO ROCK MUSIC, SERIOUS DRINKING; CUSTOMISING FORD CAPRIS AND WHO LOOKS LIKE NEL YAM, FOR SOME TIME NOW, AND BELIEVE ME THEY'RE HARD TO COME BY!
AS FOR YOUR PROPOSED ZINE, I WISH YOU ALL THE LUCK IN THE WORLD WITH IT, AND READERS PLEASE NOTE, THAT THE AD MENTIONED APPEARS IN THE 'HORROR MARKET' THIS ISSUE

'THE UNNAMABLE' MEATIER EFFECTS? OR IS IT JUST RUN OF THE MILL, TEEN IN PERIL CRAP?

Dear John,

Thankyou very much for the excellent issue number 4 of 'W S.'. Also thanks for mentioning 'The Gorefest' and my review of SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW.

I found your current issue to be quite informative, especially for us fans in the colonies, it amazes me the censorship by British friends are plagued with, and the extreme nature of your politicians restrictive conservative laws regarding viewing in movies. I've seen the uncut versions of all the films on your unbelievable 'video nasty' checklist I really feel bad for the British genre fans and I wish wanting could be done about it I get letters all the time wanting me to send video copies of many of your censored movies I try not to get involved in exporting material your government has outlawed. At least publicists like yours bring the issues concerning the light, and maybe enough gorehounds will soon eliminate these unconstitutional laws

Keep up the goodwork and you can count on American gorehounds to support you and the freedom of expression you represent

Best wishes,
Rod Simon,
Publisher/Editor The Gore'ast'
Indianapolis, USA

GOOD LETTER BOB, AND I'M AFRAID THE CENSORSHIP LAWS OVER HERE ARE GETTING WORSE IF ANYTHING, TROUBLE IS, THERE SEEMS TO BE NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT BUT WRITE IN PROTEST I'VE A GOOD MIND TO SEND THIS LETTER TO THATCHER SO SHE CAN SEE A FREEDOM LOVING AMERICAN 'ERE, CALLING HER A COMMUNIST THOUGH I DOUBT IT WOULD EVEN DENT AN ECO AS OVERBLOWN AS HERS

THOUGH THE LAST ISSUE OF 'WHITEWASH SMILE' WAS UNIFORMALLY WELL RECEIVED, A CERTAIN COMMENT I MADE DURING MY VIDEO NASTY DEBATE, RATTLED A FEW CAGES AND AS THE FOLLOWING BUNCH OF LETTERS SHOW, I REALLY PUT MY FOOT IN IT . AGAIN

Dear John,

Loved issue 4, it's nice to see some new life being spanked into the censorship/nasty debate, but you did ask for comment, so here goes

Your comment on the banning of nazi films being justified, with all due respect, is equally as stupid as anything Mary Whitehouse could dream up, and a very dangerous statement from someone who claims to enjoy splatter movies. Isn't it absolutely hypocritical to write such stuff after giving us such a perfectly rational piece as the first paragraph (read it again "It's what they stand for that's important").

Now naturally no-one is going to defend the Nazi war-crimes (although the nazis weren't the only ones doing it, check out the old Hammer film THE CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND(1958) among other others), but why pick on the war-crime subject alone for censorship. The excuse that they are real events is shit - hey, let's ban DEGRADED or TOKEN CRANEWAY for being based on Ed Geein's lunatic crimes, let's ban HANDS OF THE RIPPER, or even DRACULA (how many people did Vlad the Impaler kill?), let's ban just about any Vietnam film I mean there are knobheads out there who idolise Freddy Krueger, a gleefully unrepentant child molester (these are the people who are sick!) - shall we ban the ELM STREET movies because another child was raped yesterday I think not!

It's all a matter of extremes. The only crime SS EXPERIMENT CAMP is guilty of is bad taste. If you don't like seeing war crimes trivialised, don't watch the very film - no-one is forcing you Unless you have shit for brains (and I know you don't John) then you know exactly what the film is about, I really should'nt be shoving this way of thinking down your throat, as I hope I never hear you condoning censorship again y'hear!

The rest of the issue was utterly wonderful. Richard Griffith is intelligent and funny (wow!) and I want to have his babies' (Though I must say (ooops, here I go again!) that children must certainly do not need protesting from bad language, violence or sex, for if you do, they ll grow up like the aforementioned Mary Whitehouse, This does not mean ZOMBIE FLESHEATERS is perfect u-cert viewing, but never cut kids off from reality And if you're still my buddy, let me just say all the best, and keep up the formidable work.

Mike Sletter,
Crawley,
Sussex.

I'VE ALREADY REPLIED IN PERSON TO MIKE'S LETTER, AND HIS PUNISHMENT FOR SPEAKING OUT OF TURN IS TO REVIEW 'RESPLEURICE' THIS ISSUE. HOWEVER I STAND FIRM ON MY NAZI COMMENT, THOUGH THE TRUE-LIFE LINE HAS CORRECTLY BEEN POINTED OUT AS A WEAK ARGUMENT, I SAY THERE HAVE TO BE CERTAIN GUIDELINES AS TO CAN OR CAN NOT BE SEEN, AND I FOR ONE DON'T MIND NAZI FILMS BEING OFF THE SHELF, AND IF YOU DON'T AGREE WITH THAT, THEN I PITY YOU, OR PERHAPS YOU'D PREFER IT IF CHILD PORN WAS FREELY AVAILABLE OR SNUFF MOVIES? THERE HAS TO BE GUIDELINES THOUGH OBVIOUSLY THE DRAWING UP OF THEM MUST BE MORE PRECISE I FEEL THIS ARGUMENT WILL CONTINUE . . . NEXT SPEAKER!

Dear John,

Thanks for W.S. 4, nice artwork, nice layouts and where do you get these great skills from? I can never find material like that

Here are my opinions on this nasty debate?

Firstly I must disagree with your statement that censorship should be employed on films like BEASTS IN HEAT and SS EXPERIMENT CAMP There you were criticising censorship only to welcome it on two films that you may are sick Surely this is the attitude of these people who banned the nasties in the first place? I'm sure these films are sick, but surely you would allow people to make their own minds up about it?

Your argument for agreeing with the censors on these films, is that they are hideous subject matter and real events, but so do films based on Ed Gein, Jack the Ripper and many other true-life murderers I personally find many films sick and offensive, but I would allow others the freedom to be sickened or offended.

I agree with you however that the guidelines we to under the watching horror films should be drawn up with parents and not through the government The only answer to this whole debate is to legalise all films, and introduce very strict and tight controls, as you say Then at least the police wouldn't have to run around after bootleggers and generally make a nuisance of themselves.

What concerns me more than the 39 banned films, is that we get such heavy censorship on the new releases I understand that in 1992 trade barriers are to be broken in the EEC and apparently this will lead to European videos flooding the British marketplace, legally or otherwise Do you know anything more about this?

And finally, as always, keep up the good work!

Ajit Kumar,
Bilston,
W.Midlands.

WELL BONE AJIT FOR PICKING UP ONCE MORE ON THE NAZI FILM COMMENT, THAT CAUSED MAJOR OUTRAGE AS THIS LETTER'S COLUMN REVEALS. YOUR POINT ON 1992 IS VERY INTERESTING, AND QUITE FRANKLY I DON'T HAVE A CLUE HOW IT WILL AFFECT OUR VIEWING, BUT I CAN ONLY HOPE IT WILL I PROVE IT, AND IF TRADE BARRIERS CAN BE BROKEN, PERHAPS WE CAN COME INTO LINE WITH THE REST OF EUROPE AND BRING THE CENSORSHIP BARRIERS TOO.

Dear John,

Many thanks for the latest W S which I enjoyed immensely. The issue raised many interesting and valid points concerning the career of censorship I was glad however that you said there are some films that do need censorship. Warped shit parading as horror movies, Nazi camp movies etc, I think are in very bad taste and are extremely degrading to all concerned and it's just this type of crap that gives horror a bad name. Horror I feel concerns art, story, characters and imagination A horror movie succeeds by creating the unreal into a tangible and imaginative form. Video nasties use only nudity and gore They titillate the basic instincts and use violence and bloodshed in there only for the sake of it. Pathetic!

Another interesting highlight was the cannibal epics reviewed in the mag. I was particularly appalled and concerned by the killing of live animals in these films, as mentioned in the critique. This is the level I suppose the film-makers have sunk to in order to try and interest the audience as there is no other highlight available, story, acting and atmosphere have gone out of the window as they can get all the audience into its running length Absolutely the ultimate insult to the viewer is that the film-makers are making money from this distorted and infantile shit. Anyone who reviews CANNIBAL MAN or FERCK etc are good films are on the same level as those who make them. People who enjoy watching rape, sadistic acts and butchery and not horror enthusiasts, they're just sick!

Take care mate,
Gareth James,
Walsall, Staffs.

SOMEONE WHO AGREES ON THE NAZI FRONT, GLAD I'M NOT ALONE MY FINAL STANCE REMAINS THAT THOUGH I FEEL LIKE CAREYS SCENE, THE VAST MAJORITY OF NASTIES AND GORE FILMS IN GENERAL, UTTER AND WORTHLESS SHIT, I STILL THINK THEY SHOULD BE FREELY AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO WANT THEM, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY THERE HAS TO BE GUIDELINES OR ELSE ANYTHING COULD BE VIEWED, I HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO OUTLAWING CHILD PORN; ANIMAL MUTILATION (AND YES EVEN NAZI FILMS) AND SUCH, AND I DOUBT ANY RATIONAL FAN HAS, BUT THE GUIDELINES SHOULD ONLY BE THERE FOR THE DANGEROUSLY OFFENSIVE, AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THE MAJORITY OF THE OUTLAWED FILMS ARE SUCH!

Dennis Hopper: "Being Frank"

PART ONE

The interview Fear could nt get' An exclusive by RICHARD GRIFFITHS.

Dennis Hopper, the man for whom the word 'enigma' was created. In the sixties he touched our social consciences with the brilliant EASY RIDER, yet now, in the eighties, he actually cast Sean Penn in the controversial film he directed, COLORS. He invariably plays outcasts, people who society would rather leave behind, and yet, strangely, he has never starred opposite Terry Scott, or even Bobby Davro!

He arrived at the Kunsthaile, Basel, on a cold and wet 20th August, looking so fucking suave, under the impression he was there simply to sign copies of his new photograph book, and open an exhibition of the same material. Little did he know that when he would return later that day, I would be waiting with a tape recorder to ask this exceptionally easy-going bloke a few surface-scratching questions about the two films I know you all want to know about. The brilliant BLUE VELVET, and the not quite so brilliant TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2. My deepest thanks must go to both Mr.Hopper and Dr Jean-Christophe Ammann of the Kunsthalle for allowing this interview to take place.

WS: TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2. Have you seen the original film?

DH: The first one? Yeah I did.

WS: What did you think about that movie?

DH: I thought it was interesting, I don't think it's very much of a movie. It was sort of like a horror, kind of a shocker that kids played around er....

WS: Universities?

DH: Universities, and girls showed it at slumber parties, so, there's no reality to it, there does'nt have to be. It's just a shocking, low budget, cheap film. TCM2 was a more ambitious undertaking and there's some really good special effects in it, and it has some nice things in it.

WS: I wanted to ask you about the special effects, did you actually see much of Tom Savini's work while he was doing it?

DH: Yes I did, and I think he's great.

WS: A lot of people would agree with you there.

DH: I think he's probably the most talented of anybody doing special effects.

WS: Were you worried about doing a sequel to what many consider to be a classic horror film?

DH: No, I was'nt. You know I don't take TCM2 very seriously, whereas I do take BLUE VELVET seriously. I put them in two different kinds of experiences. My management did not want me to do TCM2 at all, the agency and my manager said this was a very bad career move, and I said well to me it was a joke, and I wanted to be in it. I do consider it a joke by the way, I don't take it seriously, except for Tom Savini and the special effects which I do take seriously, 'cos I think he's great.

WS: It hes'nt been released in Britain, and the popular rumour is that 22 minutes would have to be taken out of it before it could be given a release.What do you think that would do to the film?

DH: I think it would be terrible, I don't know what the rules are in England, about this kind of thing, I don't see why there would have to be that taken out of the film, but I don't know the rules.

WS: Was it at all physically dangerous while you were shooting. At one point you had three chainsaws attached to you, and particularly the scene where you're testing the chainsaws on the log?

DH: Sometimes those things flip back, it was a little dangerous at times, I'm glad to come out with all my fingers and toes! There were times when I thought that. Also the fight, when they do the fight with the chainsaws, a little tricky. I did have a double, but I did alot of it myself, so I was glad when those scenes were over. They were a little scarier than I like to be (chuckles).

WS: What would you attribute the general lack of success, critically, and at the box-office for the film? Would you say it was Cannon's fault, interference in the final cut, or because it was an unrated distribution?

DH: I think, probably, that because it was unrated, and I also think that, I don't know that if Cannon had'nt gotten involved that the film would have ever been finished, very honestly.

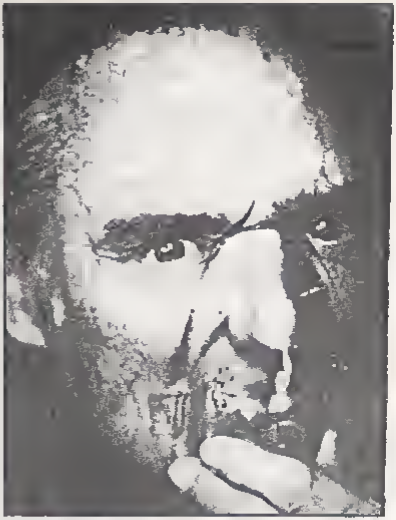
WS: They spent alot of money buying up rights.

DH: Well, not only that, but they came in, and Tobe Hooper was not up to his best stuff, I don't know why, but they had to send in various other people to finish the movie, because he was so far over budget at the end of it, so it sort of fell apart.

WS: How would you consider Hooper as a director?

DH: I don't know, I did'nt see him very much as a director, so I don't [illegible]ow.

WS. Moving onto BLUE VELVET, which is a very controversial film, how did you go about creating the character of Frank, was it mainly from the script, or from David Lynch's direction, or did you find it inside you?
DH: When I read the script, I really wanted to play Frank Booth, I really thought I understood him, he was an easy guy for me to play. The script was written by David Lynch, and it was a well written script. The only thing that I really added to the part, because there wasn't any improvisation, it was really written, was the fact that he had the mask, the gas that I was inhalling through the mask was written as helium which makes your voice sound like 'Donald Duck', and I used, I asked him if I could'nt use a supplement, kind of imaginary thing binomal nitrete, or nitric oxide which would disorient my mind. Because he had actually helium on the set and when I tried using it, I felt it was getting in the way of my acting, and I also liked the idea that he took something that disorientated his mind, and David said 'you can always dub the voice in later with helium if you want it that way', but anyway it worked that way, and he decided not to dub it, but I often think, because I really respect Lynch as a film-maker, what it would have been like to have played Frank without the disorientating of his mind, and merely by playing him as a person that by changing his voice to this Donald Duck character becomes this weird obsessed guy in a very cold kind of position. It would be a very different picture.
WS: The violence in BLUE VELVET is shot in a very surreal way, but it does come across as being very real. Do you think it's more important that such subject matters are shown as being real, which some people find offensive, or do you think it is better they're shown in a romantic, glamourised fashion, like FATAL ATTRACTION, which a lot of people find acceptable, but which also some people find offensive because they are shot in such a way?
DH: I don't know, being a film director I think that it's got to be left to the director. I find FATAL ATTRACTION an interesting film, my girlfriend Catherine, was horrified by it, thought it was just terrible, she hated the whole butcher knife thing (Catherine laughs from across the room). 'Slasher movie' she called it. I thought it was well made.
WS: Glossy?
DH: Well made, I don't know about glossy. I thought it was pretty stark stuff. BLUE VELVET I think, is a wonderful film. I think it's very surrealistic. Maybe America's first attempt at surrealism. I think Lynch is a very important director. Tobe Hooper I think is an oddity. Anybody who makes a movie is way, way ahead of the game however they do it, because it costs so much to make movies. It's hard to criticise movies at the end of it all, I mean, I figure if someone finishes a movie in the time that they're supposed to, on a certain budget, and actually get it into the theatre, they've accomplished more than most people will, so it's amazing anybody ever makes a movie and finishes it, I figure.



ABOVE, DENNIS HOPPER IN 'BLUE VELVET' AND BELOW IN 'TEXAS CHAINSAW 2'.

CONTINUED OVER PAGE.

But I don't know, I think it's got to be in the end a director's medium, and the director has to make a decision how he's going to do his violence, and then an audience can look at it, a critic can decide, and I can give a personal preference. I think that....I'm not sure that I know the differences. I know the difference between a movie I like or don't.

In part two of this interview, Dennis and Richard go on to talk about more of Lynch's work such as DUNE and ERASERHEAD. Also there's RIVER'S EDGE, method acting, Dennis' photograph book and favourite colours!!! Make sure you're here, for the concluding part of this exclusive 'Whiplash Smile' Interview.

(Dennis Hopper Interview (C) 1988 Richard Griffiths.
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Incredibly Strange Television...

by David Barraclough

For six weeks 'The Incredibly Strange Film Show' (Channel 4) has been attempting to uncover "the weirdest, wildest and most talented in the world of low budget American cinema." The result has been six documentaries, describing the careers of John Waters; Ray Dennis Steckler, Herschell Gordon Lewis; Ted V Mikels; Sam Raimi and Russ Meyer. Each provided six very unique visions of the world! All but the first lasted 45 minutes, with one hour being devoted to John Waters.

The choice of Jonathan Ross as presenter caused me some initial doubts. Would this be another series of condescending, patronising programmes along the lines of 'The Worst Of Hollywood'? Fortunately Ross proved to be both knowledgeable and relatively honest; he would admit when he thought a film to be rubbish, whilst still recognising its appeal. He also revealed his favourite all-time film to be RAT PFINK A BOO BOO. "It's hilarious, outrageous and full of bizarre things which happen for no apparent reason." It must have been the pinnacle of his achievements when Ross made his movie debut in Steckler's latest film whilst recording the series.

Another major concern was how would the producers choose to illustrate the series? Fortunately the footage was well selected, given the ridiculous restrictions of television censorship, an entertaining mixture of trailers and film clips. This was only slightly marred by a regrettable tendency to include a few too many title credit sequences.

Each episode followed a similar format. The directors life was followed chronicled, using some well chosen footage. This was supplemented by extensive interviews with the director and some of the people with whom he had worked. From the six interviews it emerged that to work in the low-budget, independent American cinema you needed a degree of arrogance, a passion for the movies, a great determination to keep making films and a weird home decorated with momentoes of your career. (I know this is a generalisation, you could name at least one director not conforming to each category). It also emerged that Steckler was the most personable, Waters the wittiest and Mikels the most eccentric aswell as being the maker of the dullest films.

Overall an excellent series, with only a few minor quibbles. Sam Raimi has not really made enough films to warrant inclusion (his films have also been widely available), Waters was not really deserving of more coverage than the others (again, his films have been more readilly available than, say, the films of Steckler and Lewis) and the aforementioned restrictions of censorship. If only Channel 4 had actually shown a few of the movies! And one personal gripe - how could they miss out America's most talented independent director, Larry Cohen?

There is also good news for the future. Mondo Films, in conjunction with Replace Pictures, are planning to release three Ray Dennis Steckler movies ([illegible] EDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES WHO STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME CRAZY MIXED-UP ZOMBIES; [illegible] THRILL KILLERS and RAT PFINK A BOO BOO) as soon as they have been cleared by the [illegible]or. "We've started with Steckler because he is both the most accessible and [illegible]ining. Russ Meyer has an agent for his films over here already, H.G.Lewis' gore [illegible] would have trouble getting a certificate and Ted V Mikels....I find quite b[illegible] three Steckler films should retail at £14.99 each, and all being well [illegible]llowed by a couple of non-gore Lewis flicks, namely SHE DEVILS ON WHEELS and [illegible]EIRD.

In a few years expect to see adverts appearing in every horror fanzi[illegible] the series. It proved an excellent companion to Re/Search's more ext[illegible] 'Incredibly Strange Films' book.

SEVERED SEGMENTS.

GOINGS ON IN THE WORLD OF FRIGHTFUL ENTERTAINMENT

THIS issue of W.S. has seen many changes, and here is another one, as up until now 'Severed Segments' has been a column devoted exclusively to news, mainly concentrating on movies in-production or due for release and so forth. However this issue sees the column transforming into something different, because despite every effort to deliver up to date news, by the time the majority of readers receive their copy, the information is old hat. Therefore from this issue onward, 'Severed Segments' will be a column of bits'n'pieces, giving a few articles of news; together with trivia, fanzines, competitions and anything else worthy of conclusion. This issue we've given over three pages to the column, mainly because we've a lot to cover, so let us know what you think of the idea.

FALLEN EMPIRE

As I'm sure you must all know by now, Charles Band's Empire outfit has folded, which came as quite a surprise a few months back, the reasons for the sell-out have been extensively covered in most of the genre-press, so I won't dwell on this, but I'll add that I thought Empire were one of the best independant companies of this decade, and were often compared to Roger Corman's outfit in the 60s. The sad thing is that Empire were getting better all the time, and such films as PRISON; DOLLS; RE-ANIMATOR and TRANCERS go to prove this. Though many of the Empire technicians, film-makers and so on will continue under a new guise the fact is that their in-house appeal will be lost, and that's a shame.

HILARY MASON interviewed by Mark Hockley

Actress Hilary Mason has appeared in many TV and film productions including Nicholas Roeg's DON'T LOOK NOW and I DON'T WANT TO BE BORN (AKA THE DEVIL WITHIN HER) with Joan Collins and Donald Pleasence. She has more recently appeared in a couple of Empire's last productions, DOLLS and ROBOJOX, both directed by Stuart Gordon.

The following short interview was conducted before the news of Empire folding, and is interesting, as the questions are partly directed towards the running of the company, and therefore gives us some insight into the company. Also interesting is the point Mark made to me of how alert she's aware of the medium film world Miss Mason is, and that certainly comes out in the following interview.

WS: How did you get your part in DOLLS?

HM: In the usual way, through a casting director who asked my agent if I would go along and read the part for Stuart Gordon when he came to England to cast the four English parts, i.e. Guy Rolfe; Hunty Reilley Cassie Stewart and myself.

WS: How did you find the rest of the cast to work with?

HM: We all worked extremely well together from the start Guy Rolfe I'd never met before and was immediately enchanted by him, he's has so much experience in so many films. He was dedicated, painstaking and immensely hard-working. I had never worked with a group of American actors before and liked them enormously. Patrick and Stephen and Carolyn, the older actors were all very enthusiastic and very friendly towards Guy and myself, it was a friendly set.

WS: What was your impression of Stuart Gordon?

HM: Oh, a lovely man, driving and energetic and full of ideas. He always seemed relaxed and on top of the situation and would give plenty of suggestions. He suddenly asked me if I could sing. I bit I said, not much, so he said he would have me singing a lullaby to one of the dolls in a room. This was instead of a scene where I was supposed to be playing the piano and then as suddenly hearing the little girl tip-toeing into the room, I was to howl like a wolf! Maybe in the end this change was a good idea, it looks good and eerie I think. The howling like a wolf might have got a few titters where none were intended'

WS: What was your opinion of Empire film studios and the general running of the company?

HM: I really don't know much about this. DOLLS was made in November/December 1985 just after the studios were opened The whole place was a bit derelict but was in the process of being done up and though I am sure there were a few hiccups everyone seemed very helpful, even sure as if you could manage a bit of Italian and I was very happy there. Since DOLLS I have made ROBOJOX for Stuart too. This time he asked someone to ring me from Los Angeles and ask if I would like to play the part of a genetic engineer (ROBOJOX is 100 years in the future) and this was very pleasing. When I went back to Rome in February/March of 1987, the studios had had a great deal of money spent on them and were very smart.

WS: Did you meet Charles Band whilst in Italy?

HM: No, I never met him, though his father, Albert Band produced ROBOJOX and I did meet him

WS: What were your feelings about the finished film DOLLS and your own performance?

HM: I was somewhat startled by the amount of violence in it although I thought it very well done. The dolls were done by John and Vivian Brunner who put an enormous amount of hard work into them and I thought they were terrific. I thought that possibly the retribution for the two girls, Rusty and Cassie, got was a bit severe for the tricks they were planning, pinching some of the antiques. However, I

HILARY MASON IN 'DOLLS'.

know much Bloodbulling is popular and can help sell the film and overall DOLLS wasn't too bad in the respect, at least the little girl and her companion (Stephen Lee) escaped! My own performances are sometimes what I hoped they'd be and sometimes not, like the curate's egg, good and bad in parts. I have to trust my director very much.

WH: Would you like to appear in more films of this type?

BH: I don't mind what I appear in really I just like to keep working in television and film. If they had a little fantasy about them and a chance to experiment, so much the better.

21.00.32 Capital 142 Stereo 36

Ein FOM UNIFILM Verleihfilm
THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD - PART II
Einzelaufführung/A Kanal-Dolby-Stereo
Vorstellungen: 3.5. 7 und 9 Uhr
Rosie • Sa 20.15 9 WITCH CAR CONTEST

A-HA, IT'S BUNTY THE BLOODY!

I'm sure you all recall the award winning A-HA video in which Morton Harket and a cute gal (Bunty Bailey) are chased through a cartoon by two motorcyclists with spanners. Well how would you like to see that same nice girl all punked up and screaming "Wanker"? This is just one of the plus' to viewing Stuart Gordon's DOLLS in which the dialogue stinks but the title stars are genuinely scary and very strange. The acting, on the whole, is pretty dire also, with the exception of the Witches Hartwicks, Gabriel and Hilary, played by Guy (THE STRANGLERS OF BOMBAY) Rolfe and Hilary (DON'T LOOK NOW) Mason respectively, who are both superb. The remainder of the cast stink to high heaven, like Bunty's punkette and her equally punky companion, a punkette called Enid at that, played by Cassis Stuart, who's full-frontal charms you may have ogled in Channel 4's SCARED HEARTS a year or two back. The kid in the movie is a strange though. I think that she is a midget. 'Rubbish' you may all chime, but I'm talking about a thirteen or fourteen year old midget playing a seven year old girl!

- PAUL HIGSON.

(Interestingly enough Bunty Bailey also appeared in the Billy Idol video, of To Be A Lover, and apart from that Tobe Hooper has directed Idol's latest vid, now try telling me he didn't snatch the title of his album from us! -Ed)

NEWS SPLASHES!

YOU SAW IT HERE FIRST! The film every serious [illegible] is aiming to get in their collection shortly is to be MAD [illegible]'s debut feature from New Zealand's very own Peter Jackson. Already the winner of its coveted best gore film at the Paris Festival, the movie seems unlikely to see a UK release, as it apparently contains a non-stop barrage of slapstick or other, the likes of which haven'nt been seen since the heyday of Sam Raimi! To whet your appetite, highlights include brain devouring with spurting, cutting remarks to be [illegible] with a machine gun; drinking vomit, heads split open, arms ripped off, [illegible] chainsaw mayhem, and quite possibly the world's first ever scene of a sheep being destroyed by a rocket! Well it is from New Zealand remember! The plot? Oh that, simple really, it's about a bunch of aliens who come to earth in stock up their intergalactic fast-food chain!

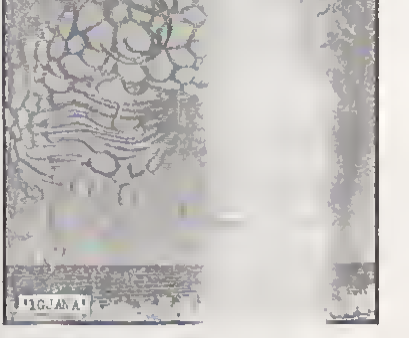
GRITTERS 2 works . . . ANWORKS has been cut by five minutes for its 'R' release! . Gremenberg's TWINS is now DEAD-RINGERS. . . ELM STREET 4: THE DREAM MASTER took a staggering 12.8 million dollars on its opening weekend in the States! . . . Tobe Hooper has let slip that there may well be a TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 3! . . . PET SEMETARY is finally in production .. .... title of the month: MUTANT ON THE BOUNTY ... WON'S HELL ISLAND is full SLAUGHTERHOUSE ROCK! Famous horror folk in music, David Gremenberg plays drums in Springsteen's E.S. Band! Second best title of the month: WALNO SAUNDERS-REVENGE. DICK WITHOUT A BRAIN [illegible] Trema hit back with two bloodies - TOXIC AVENGER II, their most ambitious film to date, and ANN, an off-beat bottle film with the usual Trema refinements such as severed ears; sickness twins and blind snipers! [illegible] famous horror folk in music, part 2, Michael Ironside plays drums for Bruce Hornsby and the Range! Fulci's ZOMBIE 3 has opened in Italy, and forward word is it sucks, and apparently like so many of his recent efforts (MURDEROCK; ANIMOMA etc) it seems he fell ill during shooting, the film being completed by Bruno (ZOMBIE CRAWLING DEAD) Mattei of all people! Despite his bad health Fulci plans more projects, ever to our Italian Correspondent (Sounds professional hunt):

Fulci announces many new films including BROKEN MIRROR (aka ALICE BROKE THE MIRROR) and BLOODY PUNCHS. As already stated he has been very ill lately, and rumours abound of his minimal involvement in ZOMBIE 3, which I'll be reviewing next issue.

LA BOTTE DELLI SQUALI is the new Tonino Ricci movie, about (yawn) sharks, NIGHT OF THE SHARKS, to give it its translation, was cut here for about a week, then disappeared without trace, just like BELLA VILLA IN FONDO AL PANCO (THE VILLA IN THE PANS) directed by Anthony Asonti (aka Giulano Carrozzo). This are stars three famous stalwarts, David Warbeck (THE BEYOND), Janet Agren (of various soft-core films and to mention EATEN ALIVE and ZOMBIE 'RESURRECTIONS') and Ana Orianski, who once again regularly appears in soft porn, and featured in the still to be released PATROL - A TASTE OF FEAR (a futuristic, post-modern thriller), the story would seem to be of a werewolf!

IGUANA, isn't exactly an Italian horror film as it is directed by Monte Hellman, but it does have an Italian crew. This one looks like a twisted, horrific version of THE ELEPHANT MAN. Pinkwise, a man is disfigured by a [illegible] deformation so his face that makes him appear like, you guessed it, an iguana! He lives on the Galapagos island, and Cheetah (the said iguana-man) takes prisoner any visitor to his shack, even going as far as to murder those who [illegible] accept his love and be even raped a girl, who gives birth [illegible] offspring. The big question is does she lay an egg [illegible]? It all sounds very strange.

- MAX BELLA MORA.



THEY KNEW TED V MIKELS

That Whiplash Smile favourite Ted V Mikels has recently been covered on 'The Incredibly Strange Film Show' and if you refer back to our article in issue 3, you'll notice the comment on Mikel's use of "total unknowns". This is largely true of the Mikel's directed horror films, but his non-genre efforts and movies on which he served only as cinematographer have starred Tommy Kirk, Little Richard, Lyle Waggoner, Anthony Eisley, Michael Ansara and even Harry Dean Stanton. Another horror film which he photographed DAY OF THE NIGHTMARE (1965) is credited with John Hart, Liz Renay and John Ireland, John Carradine (working a second time with Mikels) wasn't the only name in ASTRO ZOMBIES either as the poster accompanying that article informs us with the Wendell Corey credit. Also starring in ASTRO ZOMBIES was Rafael Campos, who's previous films had included THE BLACKBOARD JUNGLE. Campos never made any other horror films, but will no doubt be remembered as the Mexican gardener hero of the popular TV mini-series 'V'. His obscence from the subsequent weekly series was noticeable, but unavoidable. By the time filming on the series had begun he had been admitted to hospital, soon to die prematurely of cancer in 1984, aged in his mid-40s.

- PAUL HIGSON.

THE FANZINE SCENE

SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT THIS ISSUE, DUE TO LACK OF SPACE, I'LL TRY TO MENTION ALL THE ZINES I HAVE SPACE FOR, SO I'LL KEEP THE COMMENTS AS BRIEF AS POSS

VIDEOSY LEISURE. (PRICE NOT CERTAIN - SEND A AIT FOR REP) From: ANT STRUTHER, 22 MARAKA AVE, KEROR, AUCKLAND 3, ZEALAND. K.P's is at ever slow, and good it is too! Interesting and varied contents, and naturally quite a bit on BAD TASTE

BIT NEE HORRIR (50p) From: MARTIN SMITH, 45 BALLYDELL RD MONEYLAGH, PORTGORMANS, CO MOUR, BT23 6EN, N IRELAND Ok, ok, so it's a music zine, but issue one does have two pages of introductory horror from yours truly, and the same issue also boasts Charles Manson and B-movies plus macho music... Recommended with complete bias!

FIZZ (50p) From: PAUL HOLYNEUX, 1 FAIRFIELD ST, PENDLETON WIGAN, LANCS WN5 8BL
Very amateur - handwritten ( ) flyer with incredibly quite-at contents, i.e. "THE FLY, HELLRAISER etc. Tatty! Can only improve!

SPACEWARP CINEMA (4 dollars each) From: WILLIAM CORNOLLY 1435 HOLLYWOOD 4 HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028 USA
50 pages of B-movie cinema from special movies through D'Agata to Bartelucci. Various contributors including Craig Ledbetter, not my age, but will appeal to those into pasta-flicks.

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE (couple of US dollars) From: PSYCHOTRONIC FILM SOCIETY, PO BOX 14483 CHICAGO IL 60614 - 0483
Weird little zine which seems to be connected to a film club in the Windy City, so is of limited appeal to a UK audience. Includes Jap animation, Bing Lore flicks on vid; letters etc

IMAGINAFUR (60p) From: KEN MILLER, BRAMBS HOUSE, KINGSHILL RD FOUR ASHES, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP13 5BB
Issue 3 is newly available, and claims to be a "rather sleazy issue" which indeed it is with an article (and green stills) on castration in the movies, plus reviews of ILSA, BEAST IN HEAT etc. Next bite include my reviews of SCHOOL OF MORE OF THE DEVILS & FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM! Recommended reading as this keeps getting better!

DEEP RED (quote a few dollars) From: PANTAGO, 21 CENTRAL AVE, ALBANY NY, USA
Issue 4 of this genzine includes SPIRIT TRASH, a letter from me (& John Martin!) THOMAS Monomlotter; Karloff etc, the new issue 5 apparently includes a plug for us, though I've yet to see it. Final point: Impressive publication though too "X-orientated for life on good! And too expensive with it!

VI-CHOW TERROR (4 dollars subs) From: CRAIG LEDBETTER, BOX 5367, KINGWOOD, TX 77325, USA
Continues to keep praise on UK fandom, to the scorn of US fans, but apart from this it still manages to churn up new lows of ultra-obscuritis. Recommended reading, and congrats on the new baby Craig!

MEANS (£1) From: Brigid Cherry, 7a WOODHAW, THE GLANTY, EGHAM SURREY, TW20 9AP
Impressive mag with top marks for presentation. Varied mast ents that mix horror with science-fiction and fantasy, both in film, TV and literature. High standard of writing

SHEER FILTH (50p) From: DAVID FLINT, 39 HOLLY ST, OFFERTON STOCKPORT, SK2 4JE.
Issue 4 is new out with the usual trash/sleaze/porn and filth. Stuff on Jayne Mansfield; CANDY OF movies; Irving Klaw's SM stuff, and the regular bunch of reviews such as NIGHT DREADS; PSYCHO SLIMERS; HORRIBLE HOWARD and MANSE EXCHANGE by me! Goes without saying, you should be reading it!

SANGAM (£1.50) From: JOHN GULLIDGE 16 SKY GROVE RD, TOP SPAM EXETER, DEVON, EX3 0QR
Issue 11 sees the departure of Pam Richards and our arts; the political leanings towards the extreme remain in view and hell, Paul Higson interviewing Jeff Burr. And that is about all I can really to be said, you all know this one by now

CONFRERE (15 dollars for 10 issues) From: 2535 SOUTH DOREN GARDENS CT, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46229
Mad seems to be at war with Craig Ledbetter at the moment, but inbetween fanning continues to publish an issue each month, the latest (18) includes THE BLOB, MONKEY SHINES; BIG MAMA; plus the usual news etc. Superior newsletter

CREEPING DOOMSAW (50p) From: NICK & CATH, 69 ENGLAND AVE, MCCONALL, NOTTS, NG15 6PW.
SCUM issue 4 has BAD TASTE on the cover. As I said we'd covered it first in the UK! Oh well, this off beat zine grows steadily, each issue managing to be very enjoyable. Good mixture of reviews; articles and idiocy. Check this one out as it's not one of the most obvious zines around, but it is one of the better ones.

ANSEER (80p) From: IAN CAUNCE, 12 UNION RD, HURSTEAD, ROCHDALE, LANCS, OL12 9RA.
Issue 4 is a JACK THE RIPPER special. Very obscure subject matter, Ian is a veritable source of info, and I'm confident this zine will steadily keep on improving

DOMOTILLA (4,500 lire) From: MAX DELLA MORA, PIAZZA TRIPOLI 7, 20145 MILANO, ITALY.
The first proper issue now out, and is as of format unlike the trial copy. Includes a lengthy review section plus Argento interview and more. Italian dialogue.

Trevor Hatley's COLD SWEAT has reached issue 4, though I've yet to get it. He's also changed address, now at 48 ST FELLS CRESCENT, CARMEN, LONDON, N22 7PN. Rigsen produces BLEEDER'S DIGEST 4 shortly (63 GROSVENOR ST, CHORLEY, LANCS, PR6 0HF) though he seems to be spending all his time these days attempting to sell his film scripts he's been labouring on... Gareth James has run into trouble with PIECES OF MANY (51 GORSEY LEA, HERNTWOOD, WALSALL, W.MIDS, WS2 7BG) and just thing I heard was its future was in doubt, and that is bad news... RAW VIRUS (MIGE BANKERT, 50 VICAR ST, WEDNESBURY, W.MIDS, WS10 9HF) may have died on its first issue, as Mige seems intent on bringing back YEREMUNDI. Other new zines include GRIM HUMOUR from Dick in Kent; HAVE IN THE CELLAR from Steve in Scarborough and BLASH BITS from Bob in Barkeyshire. I'll try to get hold of copies of these for review next issue.

LAST bit of news. Though it's a bit sketchy yet, plans are afoot to organise some sort of film festival, which W.S. will be involved with. Bristol's horror society are the brains behind it, and Nigel Bartlett is also involved. I'll tell you more as I know it, but it certainly seems like a good idea to me. The plan is to show uncut films and rare titles that wouldn't be seen anywhere else. If you're interested, drop me a line.

DAN CURTIS - TV TERRORMONGER.

THE WHIPLASH SMILE PROFILE

CONTINUING OUR EXAMINATION OF THE CAREERS OF LESSER-KNOWN GENRE CONTRIBUTORS, WE EXAMINE THE VARIED OUTPUT OF DAN CURTIS, A FILM-MAKER WHO HAS WORKED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITHIN THE RESTRICTIONS OF TELEVISION

ARTICLE BY MARK HOCKLEY.

Dan Curtis is something of an enigma. His long and varied career began and remained mainly within the confines of television with all its restrictions and yet he has produced more horror/fantasy works of note in that media than perhaps any other single individual.

But lately he has moved away from the genre that he made his name in (despite his skill a to more mundane projects).

His first success and a notable one too was the series DARK SHADOWS, an unusual and innovative-breaking daytime soap opera, which just happened to have a vampire as its main character and what was more important, took the theme seriously. As creator of the series, Curtis was responsible for about a thousand episodes which ran from 1966 to 1970. The programme made a star of Jonathan Frid as vampire, Barnabas Collins and proved popular with audiences.

Also during this time, Curtis produced THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE in 1968 with Jack Palance as star and choice for the dual role. Directed by Charles Jarrott, it was originally made as a two part special, co-produced by American and Canadian television. Also cast were Billie Whitelaw, Denholm Elliott and Martin Shaftesbury in what was a good version of the classic Robert Louis Stevenson novel.

When DARK SHADOWS finally ended its long run and unsurprisingly its popularity, a feature film version was announced in 1970 under the title HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS. Regulars Jonathan Frid, Joan Bennett and Grayson Hall all appeared and under the direction of Curtis himself, a more full blooded and violent production than had been suitable for television was made. There are many stylish and imaginative scenes throughout, as well as make-up by Dick Miller (which resembles very much the prosthetics used for Dustin Hoffman in THE LITTLE BIG MAN around the same time).

The film proved popular enough to allow a sequel - NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS, which Curtis as usual producing and again directing. However, without Barr Frid and Bennett was did not support, the story flounders slightly, and although they had Kate Jackson as a new attraction (later of course to star in 'Charlies Angels') she was no real substitute.

If this was not enough to give Dan Curtis a place in the horror/fantasy genre's hall of fame, he was to go on to produce probably the finest made for TV horror film ever shown - THE NIGHT STALKER. With DARK SHADOWS finished, Curtis began looking for another way to treat the vampire myth seriously. Again bringing vampirism into a modern day setting, this time Las Vegas, the whole idea became uncanny real, therefore creating an atmosphere that made audiences believe, at least whilst watching the film, that just maybe it could really happen. THE NIGHT STALKER concerns a reporter investigating a series of murders involving massive loss of blood and his gradual realisation that it is, in fact, the work of a vampire. Produced by Curtis, directed with flair by John Llewellyn Moxey and written by Richard Matheson from a story by Jeff Rice, this is one of the best vampire of the fantasy film, with fine performances by Darren McGavin as reporter Carl Kolchak and Barry Atwater as the bloodsucker himself. When it was first shown it was the highest rated made for TV movie up to that time.

Not surprisingly, considering how well THE NIGHT STALKER was received, a sequel was quickly produced and aired in 1973. This time Curtis directed himself, again from a screenplay by Matheson. THE NIGHT STRANGLER once more had McGavin getting involved in a hunt for another killer whose history seems to stretch back more than a century. Although not as well done as the original, there was still much to be enjoyed and if even managed to allow John Carradine to pop up as a newspaper owner!

Later in 1974 a short lived series was made KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER which managed to run twenty two, fifty minute episodes. Although Darren McGavin gave it all he had, the emphasis was far more on comedy this time, undermining the fantasy elements. But for whatever reason it may have been audiences were no longer interested, and the series was cancelled.

Around the same time as THE NIGHT STRANGLER was shown, Curtis also produced a version of Mary Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN, directed by Glenn Jordan. Giving the title role to Robert Foxworth and that of the monster to Bo Svenson, it was not ideally cast but still proved interesting and once again re-affirmed where Curtis' heart was.

Still in 1973, the prolific Curtis had another production seen on American TV. THE MOBILES TAPES was intended as a pilot for a proposed series that would have featured another reporter (although less right hearted!) tracking down supernatural evils, but although a very well made movie, directed with skill by Dan Curtis, it did not prove popular enough to result in the series he had hoped for. Amongst the cast were Ray Thinnes (star of TV's 'The Invaders') and Angie Dickinson.

Becoming enormously busy by 1974, Dan managed to have no less than five films produced during that year, beginning with SCREAM OF THE WOLF, a weird-he werewolf thriller that finally disappoints at its conclusion, featuring Peter Graves and Clint Walker. Curtis produced and directed, and continued in that capacity with DRACULA, a superb adaptation of the classic tale, and re-uniting him with his favourite theme. Jack Palance takes on the role of the Count and is quite excellent, managing to show the tormented vampire as more than just a one dimensional figure of evil. Good support was provided by Simon Ward and Nigel Davenport and this must partially rate as one of Curtis' best productions, particularly from the director's viewpoint.

Shortly after this, a change of direction was undertaken, which was to herald, unfortunately, a saving away from the fantasy genre which until then, he had worked in so extensively. MELVIN PURVIS - G-MAN was a fictional account of Melvin Purvis' pursuit of public enemy Machine Gun Kelley in the 30s, Dale Robertson took the title role.

But Curtis was soon back with a much more worthwhile project when he did his own version of Henry James' TURN OF THE SCREW, previously filmed as THE INNOCENTS in 1960 by Jack Clayton. Lynn Redgrave took on the part of the English governess who takes charge of a young girl and boy who seem to be possessed by evil spirits. As director, Curtis once again proves himself to be as imaginative and stylish film-maker and gives to it the brooding atmosphere the story requires. Finally for 1974, he produced and directed another non-genre film entitled THE GREAT ICE RIP-OFF starring Lee J[illegible] Ming Young. It proved to be a straightforward heist [illegible] really in all honesty, was a waste of his undoubtedly [illegible]

BARRY ATWATER AS TH[illegible] FROM 'THE NIGHT STALKER' [illegible] FINEST HOUR (AND [illegible] ALLOWING [illegible] VENTS!)

But just when it appeared Curtis might put the horror/fantasy days behind him, 1975 brought with it an uneven but in parts, brilliant addition to his credits. Starring Karen Black in four different roles, TRILOGY OF TERROR was three short stories concerning murder, adultery and the supernatural. The first two segments were merely watchable, but the third and final tale based on Richard Matheson's short story

Prey that is classic of the horror cinema was crea[illegible] Director at knock-back pace and making excellent use of the claustrophobic confines of a small apartment, the story [illegible] of a woman stalked by a terrifying fetish doll came to life, in one [illegible] scene in genuine and suspenseful pieces of cellulose [illegible].

Returning next to the character of Melvin Purvis, Curtis [illegible] a sequel to his earlier movie, entitled DILLINGER CITY [illegible] ACTS.

Up until now, with the exception of his two DARK SHADOWS features, he had worked exclusively in television but in 1976 Curtis had the chance to make, what would be his first and last (up until the present time at least!) full scale, big budget horror movie- BURNT OFFERINGS. Boasting an impressive cast including Oliver Reed, Bette Davis, Karen Black and Burgess Meredith, the story concerns a family arriving at their new home, a strange old building, which gradually begins to take effect on the new residents. Although overlong, the film has many fine scenes and first rate performances. Also a major factor in the sinister feel of the movie is the particularly good score by Robert Cobert, who had up until then and continued to do so, provided the music for all of Curtis' productions. It is a pity that the film was not better received at the box-office or perhaps what was to happen afterward, might have been avoided, but since then, he has made only one genre film and now seems permanently to have dissociated himself with such productions.

His final horror film, disappointingly, was really not one of his best, when in 1977 he made CURSE OF THE BLACK WIDOW for television. A reasonable premise involving an elusive killer whose victims are found in a strange, spider-like web, was not developed into anything more than an adequate time filler.

Sadly, this was to be his farewell to the fantasy genre, since then producing and directing more routine films like WHEN EVERY DAY WAS THE FOURTH OF JULY (1977); SUNSTRAIN (1979) THE LAST RIDE OF THE DALTONS (1978) and THE RAID ON COFFEYVILLE (1979).

Due to his massive success in 1983 with WINDS OF WAR (very much a step in the wrong direction as far as I am concerned), there appears little hope of him returning to what is after all, a more difficult field to gain critical acclaim.

But can it be that someone who devoted the first decade of their career to creating all manner of monsters and demons, can really turn their back on what must surely be their first love? Let us hope that such a man who has pushed forward the boundaries of horror and fantasy, making many distinctive and memorable films, will soon return to bring us, the audience, tales of vampires, nightmares and possession. Let us look ahead with anticipation to the time when once more Dan Curtis will rise again

A STILL FROM 'THE NOBLISS TAPES' THAT MOST CERTAINLY WAS NOT CUT OUT OF THE 'TV-TIMES'!

BURNT OFFERINGS (USA 1976)

DIRECTED BY DAN CURTIS. STARRING OLIVER REED, KAREN BLACK, BETTE DAVIS, BURGESS MEREDITH AND EL FORRESTER.

Reed and Black play a married couple who take their family, and, for the Author to a mansion, they are hired for a very reasonable 900 dollars. The only condition to this, that Lucy Meredith and are tell them, is to look after their old recluse of a mother, who resides in the attic. All seems fine, but trouble is, the house has a mind of its own, and gently, does, is beginning to take over its new residents. Reed rises drawing his long-suffering wife in the pool, while desperately trying to avoid a [illegible] of his mother's hearse which he pursuing, and Black seems to be acting [illegible] a zombie and poor old Aunt Davis is first to go!

The climax is admittedly powerful, as all the family are murdered by the haunted house they are living in. As head of the family Reed, decides 'we're getting out of this God-damned house' and they are all set to leave when Miss Black, goes back into the house to tell the gardener the attic of their premature departure. She does not come back, Ollie goes to investigate, discovers his wife has become the old woman, falls out of the window to his death, his son narrows a nobody, and is promptly crushed beneath falling masonry!

A reasonable haunted house tale with above average cast, though a little too talky with not enough overtuellities.

- [illegible] MEMBERS.

OLLIE REED CLEANING HIS CAR AFTER AN ALL-NIGHT DRINKING SESSION 'BURNT OFFERINGS'.

CRYPT OF TERROR.

By Richard Griffiths

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: THE PUBLISHER(S) OF WHIPLASH SMILE HEREBY STATE THAT THE OPINIONS VOICED IN THE FOLLOWING COLUMN ARE THOSE OF MR.GRIFFITHS AND ARE'NT NECCESSARILY THE ONES REPRESENTED BY THE OTHER WRITERS, ESPECIALLY CONCERNING THE POLTERGEIST III JOKE, AS WE'RE NOT ALL SICK BASTARDS LIKE RICHARD. THANKYOU, AND NOW FOR YOUR READING ENJOYMENT, WE PRESENT 'CRYPT OF TERROR 3: PART 2.'

This week, CRYPT OF TERROR comes to you live from that Mecca of the European continent, where the word watch means Swatch, convention means Geneva, and blastphuttox means nothing whatsoever. Cheese has holes in it, small cream cakes set you back a whole weeks wages, and the chocolate manufacturers have absolutely no scruples. Cue the lights, cue the music, because today, for one year, we are in Switzerland. Scant fifteen hours from departing the traditional beauty of Victoria station, you arrive breathless in Basel, a city well known for its quaint Swiss charms, the near-lethal trams, a one way system that makes a plate of spaghetti look organised and its massive chemical industry pouring pollutants into the Rhein.

Later on I'll be previewing the latest Frank Hennenlotter epic concerning a sadistic Belgium lavatory attendant who mercilessly slaughters innocent shoppers with a razor sharp toilet brush. It opens in November, and is called 'Dying for a Crap'. But first, exciting news about the recently announced POLTERGEIST 4, no firm casting as yet, but we do understand that Heather O'Rourke will once again return as Carole Anne, this time playing the lead spook. Zelda Rubinstein; Bob Holness; Googie Withers and Paul Squires co-star! (Somehow I feel I'm going to regret printing that - I'll probably be haunted by reader' criticism! -Ed)

Film titles, especially in the lower end of the market, are very important. They intriguingly catch the eye, enticing you to hire them, playing with your imagination so that your mind forms images that are, more often than not, more hugely entertaining than the actual film. Take BLOOD BEACH for instance, please do, anywhere from me, the further the better, yes, take BLOOD BEACH. Now that to me conjured up visions of a massive nudist beach (This really says a lot doesn't it? -Ed) sucking up literally hundreds of nubile young bodies, then spitting them out in spouting geysers of scarlet blood 'n' bones. That would have been entertaining. Instead we get a dull and tawdry little flick that's no doubt a great career embarrassment to the superb John Saxon who plays a police captain, and is the only reason anyone could possibly want to watch this turgid piece of excrement. You don't start off thinking that though, oh no, as is Media's want, you get the traditional American 'R' rating certificate, and an Interpol legal warning that leads you to suspect that what you have might actually be worth copying. Such happy thoughts are very, very quickly dissipated (Spot the new word Richard has picked up in Switzerland readers! -Ed) as we see a fully clothed dog-walker pulled INVADERS FROM MARS -style into the sand with not a hint of gore. The female equivalent of Crazy Ralph turns up to proclaim "She was raped and murdered", which I suppose is at least in character, the pathologist/doctor spouts his drivel with all the feeling of a dead cow's hoof that's been injected with morphine and then left! For a long time! What is particularly depressing about this film is its high production values, I mean, the script's only got one good line in it (Saxon - "Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, you can't get to it!") and the story is just plain stupid. There aren't even any good FX in it, when the obligatory monster does finally surface at the end, it resembles a mangled leak. Thankfully it doesn't last long and gets blown up, leaving just enough time for the twist ending, which is as painfully obvious as it is un-neccessary. For goodness sakes, save your money, if you really must spend it on shit, I recommend one of those fake dog turds you get in joke shops. Considerably more fun that you'll want to repeat.

Every now and then, you come across something really bizarre. Now I may be alone in my feelings about this, I probably am, but for some reason, DROPS OF BLOOD really bugs me. After Deramn's nifty logo blazes the screen we are taken to a period Dutch setting where Hans, a young art student, is visiting a musical windmill, resplendant with its own carousel, a sort of rotating wax-work display that is being restored by the mysterious Professor Bolum, who lives there with his strange daughter Elphis, and a doctor.

One day, Elphie approaches Hans and propositions him after having been thrown on her bed by her father while being cryptically told "I'm the only one who knows you!" The next morning, when he arrives at the carousel, a single red rose lies waiting for Hans. Bolum explains that Elphie is very ill, and one crisis will kill her, the doctor being present to give her the constant medication she needs. When, later that night, Hans tells Elphie that their all too brief fling can't go on, she throws a rage, and appears to faint. Carrying her to her bed, Hans realises she's dead, and so he gallantly leaves. Confessing to Bolum and the doctor, Hans is startled by Elphie walking into the room. He is told to leave and forget it all, amid much confusion. The professor and medic talk, and we find out that they had given Hans a hallucinary drug to confuse his reality and dreams, it also transpires that they had for years been bringing Elphie back to life with massive live blood transfusions, the unhappy donors' bodies being mummified and used on the carousel. A friend of Hans, Lisa, goes to the windmill and is caught by the evil duo (Sounds painful! -Ed) and prepared for transfusion, meanwhile the doctor asks Holum for his daughter's hand in marriage. When refused, a large fight ensues resulting in the death of the doctor, and the smashing of a phial of serum, vital for Elphie's life. Hans, with classmate Ralph, burst in to save Lisa just as the windmill begins to burn, Dad takes Elphie's body up to the roof, a curious place to go bearing in mind the predominant direction of flames, and the three escape as the music starts and the dummies creakingly rotate. And that, basically, is DROPS OF BLOOD. It's very much a curio period piece somewhat in the Hammer mould, that would be difficult to recommend anyone to see it. It's nice to know a bit more about these oddities, so a quick look in the Aurum oracle, reveals that not only has one of us got that BLOOD BEACH quote wrong, but also DROPS OF BLOOD was made in 1960 as a joint Italian/French venture with a German star set in Holland to a Flemish tale. Well, with a pedigree like that, it couldn't help being anything but a bewildering muddle.

and now the answers to last week's competition, the first answer was, which I think most people got, £175 million to Alan Bond, and $4.4 million dollars to Weintraub. The second answer was anything on the lines of "Barefaced lies and hypocrisy." Question 3 the correct answer was (c), they in fact have no integrity whatsoever. Many people had problems with question 4, it was actually "The British Film Industry" they have destroyed, so sorry to all those people who came close with 'the lives of the people they've walked on", and finally, question 5, 8 pints of cream milk, 4 packets of All-Bran, 7 whole cows, 21 lbs of chips, a crate of beer, and 13 chocolate cakes, just for breakfast. So congratulations to Mrs. Johnson of Slough who wins the pieces of rubble from Elstree Studios. K.Titmangle of Oswestry gets the booby prize of a brand new copy of their wonderful remake of INVADERS FROM MARS. Onto this week's competition, as usual the prize is the much-coveted bumper funpack of luminous, musical TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2 timpins, and the question is "Why did Empire fold?"

IF YOU WANT TO WRITE TO RICHARD, CRITICISING HIS COLUMN, OR JUST BEING PERSONALLY INSULTING, YOU CAN DO SO AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS, VALID UP TO THE END OF MAY 1989. YOU KNOW HE LOVES IT!
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WANTED: Can anyone not there help me replace my copy of AMERICAN GRAFFITI which I accidentally taped over recently? If so, I'd be greatly indebted, and might even pay money! Write to JOHN HILL, EDITORIAL ADDRESS.

A REPORT BY JOHN HILL.

SHOCK AROUND THE CLOCK II, may have been organised by a rival 'zine, SHOCK EXPRESS, but they were foolish enough to let me in, or what the hell, why should'nt I cover it? For their skilliveer to the whole event, S.A.T.C. was the second annual all-day and night horror film festival, held at the Scala cinema, in London's Kings Cross. Over the course of some twenty-one hours, eleven feature films and two prazes were screened; various celebrities uttered their thoughts, prizes were dumped upon the unsure and myself and five hundred other fright-fans sat through the lot, let the story unfold!

My trip down to London ran relatively care-free, though an the Inter-city from Grantham I did have the misfortune to be seated behind a gang of boisterous businessmen who seemed unable to keep their conversation below the level of a high-pitched scream, though I wan't here yen too much with their brain-rot, except to divulge the story of the lady in Kent who apparently done something quite odd with a cucumber and a bowl of whipped-cream!

Stepping onto King's Cross platform at a prompt 10.40, I was early, never mind I thought, at least I had allowed myself plenty of time to find the damn place - I need'nt have bothered, the Scala is literally a stone's-throw away, and the queue to get in was already well formed. Deciding not to join it, I headed off into the heart of the city in the quest for entertainment, and most importantly the legendary shop for gaurs film-freaks, the 'Forbidden Planet', who as coincidence would have it, were one of the partiers behind the SHOCK event. Having located the site of Forbidden Planet 2, I was somewhat alarmed to discover it was shut - what up! The damn place had only moved premises!! No bugger had told me! Fortunately, the new premises was'nt too far away, and is vastly superior to the old shop anyway. Browsing along the shelves, and trying desperately not to give my true identity away to a mob of sadistic Star Trek fans, for fear of my life, I sheer some reading matter, and headed back to the Scala. My trek to Forbidden Planet to gather literature had been totally pointless, or some inside the cinema I discovered the Forbidden Planet stand that had been set up in the foyer, which was doing spectacularly well, as fact I could'nt even see what was on sale for the legions of fans swamping the place! Giving this up as a waste of time, I headed up stairs to the actual cinema, to grab a seat, whilst they were still available. Settling for an aisle seat on the top left-hand side, I dumped my supplies, set my bear-trap so no-one knocked my seat and decided to head back downstairs into the foyer to at least try and get a programme... Stood over in the corner of the foyer near the bar/cafe was the shy and retiring Shaun Hutson, who surprisingly enough really does look like that!! Deploying the trusty knee to the knockers routine, I managed to fight my way through the mob, I grabbed my programme and was away.

I was glad to note there were more films on view than originally announced, which was good news, though the omission on the programme of CYBER and HELLRAISER 2, certainly was cut. It seemed HELLBOUND could'nt be screened as it had'nt been completed in time, and the reason behind the non-screening of CYBER layed fair and square with co-organiser Stefan Jaworzyn who admitted in front of a full-house that he did'nt think we'd want to put up with or Italian print of the film... the reaction to this was, needless to say, unsightly. Still, the actual line-up was impressive with 11 new features and 2 prazes, all UK premieres, all uncut and all in less than 24 hours.

Stefan J of SX fame and Alan James of SF and Starburst site were the organisers of the event and acted as compares too. Still, it was 1 o'clock and time to get underway, with a screening of William Freund's monster movie INVASION OF THE BODY SUCKERS, once entitled BLOB VONNER. I enjoyed this one, I formed a fine opening to the festival, as you didn't need to switch your damn brain cells to appreciate it. Basically a big bug on the loose tale, this was'nt more than a title in the classic monster flicks of the '50s which I so cherish. There is a definite tongue in cheek attitude to this one, and the creature itself is well done though a little stiff in the joints. Steve Neill's gore effects which include the beast ripping one poor sod's head off, were met (like every gore outbreak throughout the day) with rising applause... so was the ending of the film, which left the tally one down, ten to go!

Interleaved the films came the wonderfully tacky raffle-draw, which was an utter shambles, as poor old Alan and Stefan along with unsuspecting celebrities tried to entice the audience with various T-shirts, videos, Freddy Kruger alarm clocks, SPACEBALLS calculators and a seemingly endless supply of KIM WILDE'S 12" singles which nobody in the house wanted, and I'm not surprised, have you ever heard Bobbin sing? In the break between films when the viewers had the opportunity to hand off for food and toilets, various film personnel took the stage to chat to the crowd, first up being Ramsey Campbell who laid into BODY SUCKERS with great aplomb.

Next on the line-up was THE UNHOLY, directed by Camilo Vila and starring a top-notch cast. The film started promisingly with an early shock scene which actually made a cinema full of horror-fans jump from their seats. The remainder of the movie was somewhat predictable, though it livened up for a damn-energised finale. Effects ace Bob Keen who attended the festival directed the close of the film after the studio was mortificied with the final product and his effects creations were the definite highlight, and the scene where a dozen exploders certainly went down well with the crowd.

Next on the agenda was JONATHAN OF THE NIGHT, the world premiere no less, this is the ten minute prose film by Buddy Giovinazzo, the director of the cinematic a COMBAT SHOCK. Alan Jones read out an introduction to the film by Buddy, and if anyone out there has the money please give it to this man as JONATHAN OF THE NIGHT can become a full feature or intended, because in the course of ten minutes, Giovinazzo gives us one of the screen's most startling vampire transformations, or the title character Jonathan (a vampire) is shot in the head, he leans backwards, blood pouring from the wound, he stands upright again, with bloodied face, and opens his mouth to unsprung a pair of bloodied fangs. Apparently Mr Giovinazzo is to make another film entitled 24 CHAMPAGNE SUPPER or similar, which sounds promising, to say the least.

Without the warning it deserved, on came SLUGS, the Juan Piquer Simon directed version of Shaun Hutson's pulp novel. This was, in all fairness, not a classic film. In fact it was the worst film it has been my privilege to see in quite some time, yes this was astoundingly enjoyable stuff, the term being used straight away by the elaborate little sequence which spells out SLUGS. THE MOVIE. This was said by spectators laughter! A very basic tale of genetically mutated meat-eating molluscs terrorizing small town USA, this is nothing more than a series of effective gore scenes, the full benefit of which could be appreciated in this uncut screening. Literally thousands of the little bastards chomp down on Eli and society, in this delirously entertaining film which and the entire audience chuckling in glee, a film that definitely benefitted from a receptive audience such as this, somehow it won't seem the same on video from Cinebar. Poor old Shaun Hutson then had to take the stage and comment on this mass of cellulhoid masturbation, and being as calm and collected as ever Mr Hutson uttered his hopes that the film-makers do the same things as the hermaphroditic slugs, and 'Go fuck themselves'! He was upset or when he called it the horror version of AMELIA, as here director Piquer had done for the one horror sub-genre what he did for the stalk 'n' slash scam with CSS! A definite highlight of the festival, and the scene of the little slug crawling at the core's finger will be treasured for ae eternity!

Attaching a dozen films non stop does tend to mess the whole thing blends in together, hence I can't remember exactly when Jonathan Ramsey of designer suit fame put in an appearance, I think it was after THE UNHOLY as he slagged it off royally, as did Stefan J, though I didn't think it was das bad! Still, back to the films, she apart from joining in with the never-ending raffle, Ramsey told Alan James of his 'Incredibly Strange Film Show' giving us odd stories about Tod Browning and George Romero among others. Interestingly Romero was going to be covered in the series, but he turned out to be such a dull and boring interviewee that they decided otherwise.

THE SEVENTH SIGN was next up, which I won't dwell on as I review it fully elsewhere in the mag, but just let me say, it isn't the dull splaude you might expect, but an intelligent, clever film which I strongly urge you to see when it opens here.

Clive Barker took the stage to explain the absence of HELLBOUND, and promised an uncut screening at another time, amongst an staggering off censorship in general, which naturally met with great support.

Standing in for HELLRAISER II was MANIAC COP, which proved to be yet another hit, and works surprisingly well as a horror/police/action/cop film all in one, not surprising since the man behind it include Larry Cohen, William (MANIAC) Lustig and James (EXTERMINATOR) Glickenhaus. A mysterious assailant is ruthlessly killing off innocent citizens, and all the evidence points to a cop as the culprit, trouble is the cop in question is dead! Good action sequences and quite tense in parts, enhanced cast too, including Tom Atkins who has a spectacular death, Bruce Campbell and Laurene Landon. Will do very well when pitted against Zombie, and should be generously successful on video next year.

With MANIAC COP ended the first of the two sessions, these departing herewith did so, these arriving filing past them wondering what was in store, and everyone else who were there for the 1st had to file out to be re-admitted. Having endured this hideous indignity, I repeated for the second half, as David McGillivray, critic and screenwriter came on to brave the crowded raffle draw! Whilst onstage, he mentioned a rumour Paul Higson spoke earlier this year, namely that Werner J Warren done indeed plan to re-make FIEND WITHOUT A FACE!

Jack Sholder's THE HIDDEN kicked off the night session at around 1:30, and it proved to be one of the best films on show, being an off-beat alien movie with a nasty alien para mite using various human bodies to do its dirty work, as its trail and various guises is Kyle MacLaughlan, who is not all he appears to be himself. Frequently hilarious, this film is one of the most frantic genre films since THE TERMINATOR, and like that movie, it is actually fast start to close, non-ing chase throughout. The production seems to have some penchant for Ferrari's hence much use of said automobiles in various spectacular car chases, excluding the opening sequence which really sets the film off to a rip-roaring start. In fact so good, I almost feel like forgiving Sholder for FRENDY'S REVENGE.

As the evening progressed late guests appeared, though Russell Mulcahy and Bob Keen put in appearances and thankfully brought the raffle to a close. As Alan James announced "Bellaks to this, we're not doing this again next year!" In fact most of the remainder of the prizes were physically hurled into the audience, and I noticed more than a few of the ELM STREET 12" singles were hurled back!

Still the show must go on, and next was WAXWORK, a film I knew little about, but it turned out to be a wholly enjoyable if not totally serious yarn with some superb special effects from the industrious Bob Keen, and this uncut print will probably have a few scenes that won't make it into the video version when it emerges, such as a scene in which a werewolf rips a blake in half down the middle -beam to green! Traditional monsters, classic actors (David Warner, Patrick MacNee) and more than a few stabs at the genre combine to make a thoroughly enjoyable movie experience, a pleasant surprise indeed.

976-EVIL is the directorial debut of Robert Englund, who should need no introduction here. The version on show was the work in progress print, and was awaiting further editing, and to be honest, it needed it, but in all fairness, 5 o'clock in the morning isn't the most ideal timeslot to judge a film's merits properly, but the film came across as competent enough though it was a little slow, maybe the edited version will work better. The plot seemed a little uncertain and did wander a bit, but I must admit, my main concern was trying to stop my eyelids from meeting during this one, I will therefore reserve judgement on this until I view it under proper circumstances.

Mel Dawson the driving force behind Avatar, and now the new video label Colourbox took his place onstage next to introduce one of his companies' films, the much touted HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS, the European premiere of in fact, I was a little surprised to hear that our beloved censor won't let it be released with the word 'chainsaw' in the title, so when it does see a release it will be entitled HOLLYWOOD HOOKERS, and almost certainly cut. Once again I review this elsewhere in the zine, so won't go into too much detail here, but I will say that it is just the sort of film that keeps you awake, and eyes firmly glued to the screen, even at nearly 5 in the morning! And if you want intellectual content in your movies then go see THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO again, and skip this one.

THE UNNAMABLE seems to have been included as the rapidly tiring audience could gather a bit of shut-eye before NECROMANTIK, and as this it was quite useful, however as a horror film it sucked, being slow, tedious, cliched as hell and an insult to fans who gave up on garbage like this years ago.

So to the last film of the evening, morning, next day, or whatever time it was, NECROMANTIK, a German amateur film that Alan James claimed was a real eye-opener and boy was he right! This was even managed to shock a cinema full of seasoned horror nuts. The climax (and I choose that word carefully) of the film was probably the most distasteful thing I've seen on celluloid since THE PIG FUCKING MOVIE, you really do have to ask yourself what's going through the minds of the people who make this stuff? I'm very much in two minds myself about this effort, my initial response is dislike, as do it may push forward the taboo of what can be shown, but you really have to ask yourself if you want the barriers extended so far that it means being able to watch re-hate being scanned alive as seeing people ejaculating blood? Also I hate films that set out to be intentionally 'arty', which is definitely what NECROMANTIK is. On the other hand though, the story is good and the ideas excellent, and I suppose I should be thankful I've been given the opportunity to see the film myself, because thanks to the state of censorship in this country, there's no way I'd be able to view it other wise.

And that was that, the end of a marathon of monsters and mayhem, to coin a phrase, 21 hours may seem an awful long time to spend in a cinema, and believe me it is, my backside died about three hours into the event, and my brain was vegetable to joining it by the end. Having said that, I'd be a damn liar if I said I did not enjoy myself, because I did immensely so in fact, this was one fun event. The chance of films seemed much better than last years event which was more an experiment, and I should be thankful for being given the chance to view so many of these films that I will probably never see again, and for £15 for the lot, I had no complaints and most definitely intend being there all over again next year, and that I suppose is the biggest compliment of all. Though it might be a good idea to extend next year's to two days, to give the old eyes and brain a bit of a rest!

FILM REVIEWS.

THE SEVENTH SIGN (USA 1987) 9.

DIRECTED BY CARL SCHULTZ STARRING DEMI MOORE, JURGEN PROCHNOW, MICHAEL BIEHN, MANNY JACOBS

I must admit, I sat down to view this film with biased adversarity, the reason being that I usually find the religious horror film, as typified by such samples as THE OMEN; THE EXORCIST and ROSEMARY'S BABY somewhat dull, however, THE SEVENTH SIGN came as a pleasant surprise and proved to be one of the best films of the year thus far.

Demi Moore plays an expecting mother who's life with middle-aged husband Michael Biehn seems tranquil enough, that is until the two of them decide to let their spare room to a lodger (Prochnow in a performance of brooding menace) who is definitely more than he seems. As the film isn't due to open until the end of the year, I'll try to keep tight-lipped about the plot, as it would be mean to rule what is afterall one of the most thought-out genre scripts in quite some time. The apocalypse theme, especially those in the early part of the film (wars, famine etc) are chillingly plausible, and the powerful conclusion to the movie had me well and truly hooked as just when you think everything is safe, yet another inventive plot twist unfurls before you.

The performances are well up to scratch, Moore is effectively mature in the role of the young woman who literally holds the fate of the world within her, Prochnow shines through in a performance of mystery that manages to be both sinister and compulsive at the same time, and its nice to see the vastly underrated Michael Biehn in a role which doesn't call for running around in a sweaty vest blowing away evil cyborgs or alien lifeforms.

Director Schultz claims the film is not horror, and I suppose in honesty, it's not, as it works on so many levels, but don't let that put you off, for this is a superior offering, full of imagination, skill and intelligence.

Highly recommended.

- JOHN HILL.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE (USA 1987) BRAVEWORLD 6.

DIRECTED BY RICK ROSSILLER STARRING SHERRY HENDORE, DON BARNETT, WILLIAM MONCY; JOE ARTON...

Did anyone else out there actually watch the morbid excuse for a film, called MORROW FARM, which I reviewed in our second issue? Well, if you thought that was all that could be mustered from the descented pig farming movie, then you'd be wrong, because thanks to a strong influence from THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, along comes SLAUGHTERHOUSE, a superior slaughter movie, and as nasty a slice of beakwards anyone as you could wish for.

Taking place around a deep south slaughterhouse, charmingly entitled 'Bacon and Sons - Dog Slaughtering', which is the object of desire of the local authorities, who want to buy the property from its owner, an eccentric old park butcher who lives in the decrepid place with his huge, retarded son, Buddy. Obviously the pig shit really starts to hit the fan when the authorities turn up at the farm, and some fool face with Buddy, who has already slaughtered various passing teens who had the temerity to be mulling around the farm, so as you can well imagine, these real assholes, who threaten the Bacon's home and livelihood, must somewhat grizzly decease. In fact, in the about print the blood oozes think 'e' fast, as all and sundry are hacked, chopped and hung out to dry! The deputy looses his hand in a pretty gruesome sequence, someone else is put in the mincer, and various beds are dismembered with Buddy's overalsed most skewer.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE is a surprisingly competant film, with a decent, though heavily cribbed plot, well above average performances (well for this sort of thing anyway) - a witty script (thank out the pig enforcements in such lines as "the boy's gone hog wild!" or the local radio station called K-FAT) and some very convincing gore effects (though these have naturally been excised from the UK version). The film also boasts a definite downbeat ending, which makes a change for fodder such as this, and certainly makes an inspired change from the blatantly obvious 'twist' endings most films are coupled with these days. An interesting plotting point that is mentioned yet goes nowhere, is the fact that Buddy has a rather, said to be even more deranged and animal-like than his deformed sibbling, perhaps this point will be explored further, if ever a sequel materialises.

- JOHN HILL.

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT. (USA 1988) 10.

DIRECTED BY ROBERT ZEMECKIS, STARRING BOB HOSKINS, STUBBY KAYE, THE VOICE OF KATHLEEN TURNER AND VARIOUS ANIMATED CHARACTERS.

Now then, what we have here is a film that ve it or not is actually as good as the reputations it has ady gained. The story takes place in Hollywood in the 40s in a town named 'Toon Town', the home of the all cartoon characters. One such 'Toon' is Roger, who wife called Jessica, and it is she who has been messing with big hot-shot Marvin Acme - a human. Acme is off, and so the title implies, Roger is framed. So hires private dick Eddie Valiant to solve the sorry mess. usual, probably, but it wasn't really matter, becau plot plays second-fiddle to the most brilliant animation ever seen, every single moment of Roger f film, where his fellow acting buddy, is seen stepping out of a real fridge, talking to ectors and entering off a real film set, was one only sit task and be utterly amazed at how lifelike and accurate the 'Toons' are. Never before have we seen cartoons being happens, or have a cartoon run through a real every splash encounted fun, every shade of, but thanks to George Lucas' ILM and about 400 technicians, it is reality.

Directed by Robert Zemeckis (BACK TO THE ROMANCING THE STONE) it stars Bob Hoskins as local dt ant, Hoskins is great, the account being almost p alongside Hoskins is ale-timer Stubby Kaye as Acme, ious voice of Jessica is supplied by Kathleen T

With a budget of around 45 million dolla m been regarded that sum sensibly and is well on becoming one of the most financially profitable times. In fact Roger Rabbit is now on everyth b boxes to underwear! When the film opens here 2nd there'll undoubtedly be even more dollar ing up. But the limelight isn't just taken up by ar, because you'll also see favourites like Daffy Duck and Sylvester. Toon

And the bottom line is - see it, and

- JONATH

PHANTASM II (USA 1988) 8.

DIRECTED BY DON COSCARELLI STARRING JA GOSE BANNISTER; ANGUS SCRIMM, SAMANTHA PHILLIPS THE.

After Don Coscarelli made one of the g d most original movies back in 1979, fans have b for something else from him to match it. released a few years ago was a tame, boring little c vhed at the box-office. So why not expand on what made your name to fame to start with? The result of o ers of little activity - a sequel to PHANTASM.

Michael, who was the younger brother of Jody who died in an auto accident, has spent the last nine years in a psyche ward, he has made mental contact with a girl in another institution that has had dreams of 'The Tall Man' Mike talks Reggie into going after the Tall Man (again played superbly by Angus Scrimm) and leaving Lix, his telepathic contact Michael and Reggie load up with unconventional weapons such as a bat-ass home-made flamethrower, and a double-barrelled shotgun veiled into a four-barrelled sawn-off weapon of destruction While following the trail of the Tall Man, they pick up a female hitch-hiker that Michael saw lying dead on an embalming room table... He passes it off as a hallucination, and the three reach a small town in ruins The Tall Man has dug up all the graves and taken the town people to the local mortuary which is now his headquarters for deflating the bodies and transporting them to the world beyond

This time there are three deadly spheres that drill through the forehead and they provide most of the gore effects Though the destruction of the Tall Man after Michael and Reggie find Lix is very good with quite a bit of gore. The only bad news is the gear ending to this otherwise successful sequel The movie should have ended about two minutes sooner and it would have been far more satisfactory, as it is, Cassavetti provides a poor wrap-out This rules an otherwise highly recommended film that is set to be one of the best genre films of the year, if not THE best.

- ROD SIMS

HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN (USA 1987) EW WORLD 6

DIRECTED BY DONALD G JACKSON & R J KIZER STARRING RONDY BUDDY PIPER, SANDRAH BERGMAN, WILLIAM SMITH

I think I can say with some degree of certainty, that I won't see another film this year, that is anything quite like HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN, which must surely rank as the weirdest post-apocalypse movie of them all

After the bomb has been dropped, the time around, it has left the male populace highly infertile, to such an extent that government agencies of female scientists are touring around impregnating any fertile male they chance of breeding. One such individual is Sam Hell(Piper) who apparently has been impregnating women left, right and centre on his travels and is pretty soon caught up with by Sandahl Bergman's Red-Tech organisation, who fit him with some rather unpleasant explosive chastity belt so they can keep him very much under control. Sandahl decides to enlist the reluctant help of Hell to rescue a group of fertile females from the clutches of the wicked despot in charge of 'Frogtown' Hell 'Frog town? Did I forget to mention the mutant species of humanoid amphibians that has sprung up in certain areas? Yes folks, this is one weird connection, that manages to throw in not about everything...

The film has a weird pantomime feeling and has some great imaginative setpieces, headlined by the wonderfully tasteless 'dance of the three-eyeless' episode which brings on a whole new meaning of the phrase 'horny toad!'

I found the film impossible to resist, whether it be the female frog stripper making advances at Hell, or big Bill Smith trying to take over the world with his proposed atom bomb, the levels of imagination are high, and so are the entertainment values In fact a great slice of brainwashed entertainment for brain-dead fans such as i.

- ELMER PUDPUCKER

PRISON (USA 1987) EV 7

DIRECTED BY RENNY HARLIN STARRING LANE SMITH VIGGO MORTENSEN; CHELSEA FIELD, LINCOLN KILPATRICK

interesting film this, lots of atmospheric, reasonably competent acting, a gritty realistic prison setting, some fun special effects, and a cliched storyline, which at times does it make an awful lot of sense, oh well, you can't have everything i suppose...

An old prison is reopened to solve overcrowding problems in other penitentiaries, this is a bad move because lurking in the depths of the old electrocution chamber is the spirit of the guy who was the last to be executed there (unjustly of course) and when the wall blocking up the entrance is broken down (in a scene which might have been lifted frame for frame from THE KEEP) there's hell to pay as a weird flashing light starts doing in prisoners and warders alike. The warden wants it kept quiet and why? Because he's the one with the deep dark secret! who gets done in at the end.

It's a very predictable film, within the first quarter of an hour you can identify all the classical horror characters such as first victim, the guy who's going to help the hero and then die near the end, and so forth By the way, for some reason the hero looks exactly like the unfortunate prisoner who gets executed during the main credits, though the reason for this is never properly explained Some of the special effects like murderous lead tubing and homicidal barbed wire keep the proceedings going nicely, I also like the bit where the only girl in the entire cast has lunch with the warden in front of all the prisoners, and none of them even notice her! Many of the scenes are darkly lit, and reminiscent of ALIENS or ELM STREET, which is interesting because Harlin is the director of the new A NIGHMARE ON ELM STREET 4 DREAM MASTER Richard Band's music score is effective without being particularly inspired and I like nice to hit more as it's probably the best thing they've done after RE-ANIMATOR

Not a brilliant film, but an effective time-waster.

- JOHN L FROMENT

DEEP SPACE (USA 1988) 5

DIRECTED BY FRED DEKEN RAY, STARRING CHARLES NAPIER; MON CLASS, BO SVENSON, AMY TURNEL, JULIE NEWMAR

Yet more ALIEN inspired antics from Glen Ray, here along similar lines to his earlier BIOHAZARD. A military biological warfare experiment goes wrong and the spacecraft containing the new breed of lifeform is crashing towards earth, where an impact the lifeform escapes within will escape and head off to chomp down on the local populace. Can the world be saved?

The first half of the film is pretty tame, with the standard build-up to the obligatory conclusion of the monster being destroyed. The climax is pretty good with Napier attacking the beast with all manner of weaponry including a chainsaw.

A standard monster on the loose tale, worth a look as a space-filler, but nothing to get too worked up about

- STEVE CHAMBERS

MINDKILLER (USA 1987) CINEPLEX 5

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL KRUSCEN STARRING JOE McDONNALD, SHIRLEY ROSS; CHRISTOPHER WARD, KEVIN WEST

Very low budget, shot on video effort, that explores simpler avenues as FROM BEYOND did a year or so back Mind control is the key here, as a couple of nerds who work in a library start tampering with the files of a dead professor who apparently perfected the method of total mind control and telekinesis, but as legend has it, he"died a terrible death " The lead nerd Warren, becomes particularly affected by the research he undertakes and is soon finding he is capable of small-scale telekinesis such as moving glasses on tables, and has the power to hypnotise girls into sleeping with him But by the climax of the movie things get wildly out of hand, and Warren's brain, seemingly tired of being impressed in such a wretched body, decides to exit its host, sprout eyes arms and legs and literally gate up and walks away! Seemingly all set up for a neat bout of rampaging brain footage, but which there is an alarming lack of in modern genre cinema, the film comes to an abrupt end before any substantial mayhem is unfurled.

The lighting seems always as a dazzling haze of yellows and reds, but this is probably due to the video camera it was shot with, and the acting and script seems to be expected in far from excellent, though despite these drawbacks the film does have its share of amateur charm, though more basic footage would have made the production a thousandfold better!

- STEVE CHAMBERS

RAMPAGING BRAIN - 'MINDKILLER'

UNDERWORLD (UK 1986) PALACE 3.

DIRECTED BY GEORGE PAVLOU STARRING LANNY LAMB; STEPHEN BERKOFF; BENNOLK ELLIOTT; MIRANDA RICHARDSON, INGRID PITT

There are a number of reasons why UNDERWORLD fails, and all are irritating.

Based on an original story by Clive Barker it all begins interestingly enough with the kidnapping of a young girl. This is staged adequately and manages to capture the viewers attention, but unfortunately, soon this scene is over, we are introduced to the hero of the piece, played by the banal Lanny Lamb, who is instructed to find the missing girl by an old gangster figure (Stephen Berkoff, in a surprisingly uninspiring over the top performance).

It is here that the film becomes rather tedious as we spend our time with the insipid Mr Lamb as he begins his search.

The director, Pavlou, who went on to make the better RAWHEAD REX, really doesn't seem to be able to find a comfortable style for the film and inevitably languishes in a no-man's land which has no appeal whatsoever. On the plus side, there is a decent score by rock group Frank, and a few good actors and actresses in the cast such as Bernkle Elliott, Miranda Richardson and Ingrid Pitt although all of these, particularly Richardson are given very little to do.

I suppose, somewhere lurking beneath the surface of this film there could have been the germ of a pretty good storytime but with its banality, which is comic-strip and with the soporific Lamb in the lead role, UNDERWORLD is no more than a jumbled, dreary waste of time. And even if its not quite as bad as this review might suggest, the fact still remains that it just is not any good!

- MARK HOCKLEY

R.O.T.O.R. (USA 1987) MGA/COLUMBIA 2

DIRECTED BY CULLEN BLAINE STARRING RICHARD GESSWEIN; MARGARET TRIGG; JAYNE SMITH

Ultra-dreary cut price ROBOCOP effort, R.O.T.O.R. stands for Robotic Officer Tactical Operations Research', and its the nickname for an embryonic experiment into the future of inner-city law enforcement, namely a robotic police officer. When the politicians funding the research into the proto-type order it to be delivered way ahead of schedule, tempers flare, and the genius behind the project (who would appear to be a mattin-hunter?) quits and the experiments are left in the incapable hands of his assistant. Therefore it comes as no surprise whatsoever to discover that when R.O.T.O.R. is accidentally operated it turns nasty, and things get ever so slightly out of hand. Without its full programming inserted, the newly activated android, because simply or emotionless, unreasoning psychotic with the single directive of "judge and execute" any crimes it witnesses. Being somewhat over-zealous, it slaughters a driver for speeding and spends the remainder of the movie pursuing his wife, until it is recaptured by its creator.

Mainly original stuff, and the tinny script and hideous tacky of even half-decent actors certainly don't help salvage this sorry endeavour. The title sensation is nothing more than a cheap in a motorcycle outfit, and the overall film is nothing more than well below average, at best! If you absolutely must watch this, then be prepared to press the fast forward button on numerous occasions, to fast when one character delivers the tacky line "What is this, a bad low budget sci-fi film?" I felt like replying "no, it's not even that good".

- JOHN HILL

NEKROMANTIK (W.GERMANY 1987) 7.

DIRECTED BY JORG BUTTGEREIT STARRING DORTHI LOREN; BEATRICE M, HARALD LUNDT; SUSA KOHLSTEAST; HEINZ SUMAN

Before I go ahead and review this film, I feel compelled to warn you, do not watch NEKROMANTIK with your father, Grandma or loved one, or you will be almost certainly thrown out of your home, for NEKROMANTIK is that sort of a film!

You can forget all your acceptable gore/splatter films and your steamy porno cinema, for this film tops the lot on it tells of a strange couple who, in a word, are necrophiliacs! The basic plot ('as there is one') is as follows; Betty and Rob have this unusuary fascination for parts of dead bodies Rob finds this desire through his job with 'Dead street cleaning agency' which is basically an agency which gets called upon to clear up road traffic accidents, bodies and all. One night Rob comes home and says with great excitement "Guess what Betty, I've got a surprise for you", and yes, Rob has gone the whole hog, and produces a complete corpse!

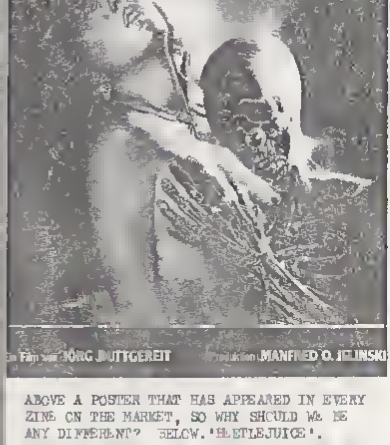
There is much jubilation that follows, and to and behold, if they don't start making love and doing weird and yucky things to the stiff (it's even too embarassed to write about it in detail!) (Well I'm not, what they do is stick a fake penis on the corpse, place on a condom(?) and begin a weird ménage-a-trois; Rob and Betty having intercourse and oral sex with it in turn! -ed).

However, things don't run so smoothly in this household as to normal ones, for poor old Rob loses his job, and Betty only goes and runs off with the corpse! Rob feeling a bit rejected (wait hell guys would'nt you?) kills his mate and takes a bath to its blood. (And fandom's its gibbets, don't leave out the juicy bits! -Ed)

Rob feeling he just can't go on anymore, strikes on the idea of the ultimate sexual experience -suicide. So there he lays, on his bed, with his dick in one hand and a knife in the other. He's not content with just stabbing himself, oh no, because this guy is such a sicko, he starts thrusting the knife in and out his stomach, as if masturbating, and yes, he actually gets turned on by it! and that is basically it except it will say, there is a bit of a twist ending (taugh, I nearly cried!)

There isn't much dialogue throughout the film, and the acting seemed confident enough for an amateur production such as this, and the music is really neat. A test of people with film this film totally sick and offensive and with bets it where take me, with see it as a fun, arty attempt to touch upon ideas rarely dealt with. All I can say, is that if you ever get the opportunity to see this film, I'd do so, because even if you don't like it, I can guarantee you've never seen anything quite like it before!

- STEVE JUDGE



ABOVE A POSTER THAT HAS APPEARED IN EVERY ZINE ON THE MARKET, SO WHY SHOULD WE BE ANY DIFFERENT? BELOW, 'BEETLEJUICE'.

BEETLEJUICE (USA 1988) 3

DIRECTED BY TIM BURTON. STARRING GLENN DAVIS, MICHAEL KEATON, ALEC BALDWIN, JEFFREY JONES, CATHERINE O'HARA, WINONA RYDER.

Lots of nice things have been said about BEETLE JUICE, including a typically over the top review by Alan Jones in "Starburst", but I think it is time to take a look at its shortcomings.

Adam and Barbara Maitland die and find that in the afterlife they are bound to remain in their house (don't ask why) they discover a book to guide them, but can't understand it, which is strange, as later a character takes care hours to plough through the weighty tome. Their troubles really begin when a city couple and their peculiar daughter move in and proceed to demolish all the work the Maitlands have done in the house. They lack themselves in the attic and find a way into another plane where they meet their ex-a-ker who is here to help them, only she does not. They resort to calling on a 'bio-exorcist' misfit, who offers to rid them of their supplies by scaring them away. Enter Betelgeuse who causes complete havoc wherever he goes.

Sound ok? Well, the good points are that its probably the best looking film ever made, and all the performances are top class except, I thought, Winona Ryder as the weirdo Lydia Deetz - she was about as unweird as they come! She certainly looked strange, but the character just was not convincing enough. Michael Keaton as Betelgeuse, I feel it goes without saying, is fabulous, a genius character. I look forward to seeing him in a few sequels. The FX are superb. There are some good in-jokes and a truly hilarious scene where a dinner party becomes possessed by Harry Belafonte.

Unfortunately, the plot has many inconsistencies and failings for example, why can the Maitlands touch some things but not others? If they are an aspect of the afterlife, how can they stream up such intricate scare tactics? Where did they learn to possess a whole dinner party? Why are their reactions as minimal to things going on around them? Why does'nt Betelgeuse just write his name down instead of a lengthy charades sequence with Lydia? I'm not trying to be a killjoy these are glaring errors. The ending too is a bit abrupt and obscure.

The best way to watch this movie is to disconnect the logic part of your brain, sit back and enjoy, because then it really will appear suitably entertaining. See it a couple of times and you will realise just how lacking it is (and just how awful the dress is that lovely Geena Davis is stuck with through the whole film!)

A film that manages to be truly excellent, bizarre yet silly and disappointing at the same time.

— MICHAEL SLATTER.

GAMES AND MONSTERS (USA 1988) 4

DIRECTED BY STEVEN M STONE. STARRING TOM HANKS, WENDY CRESWELL; DAVID WALLACE, CHRIS MAKEPEACE.

Little-seen TV movie, that was aired on Channel 4 in September. Despite the promising title, and enticing trailer, this latest Infact a genre film, more a drama with minimal genre elements. It uses the dungeons and dragons scenario to portray teenage angst, insecurity and paranoia.

A group of college friends set up a society to play the fantasy adventure game 'games and monsters', but when they begin to stray away from the game board and start to act out the moves, one of their number (Tom Hanks in his pre SPLASH days) loses touch with reality and begins hallucinating. Beside lies the film's back-bone, as the friends search for Hanks and try to bring him back to sanity.

The only real fantasy elements concern Hank's hallucinations, in which he visualises various rubber monsters from the Roman workshop. Otherwise, this is wholly uninteresting stuff, which appears to be in totally the wrong genre, and would seem far more suited to the 'Woman's Own' video series.

— JOHN GILL

HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS (USA 1988) 6.

DIRECTED BY FRED GLENN RAY. STARRING GUNNAR HANSEN, LINNEA QUIGLEY, JAY RICHARDSON, DAWN WILDSMITH, DENNIS MOONEY

In the past Fred Glen Ray has delivered some real howlers such as NECROMANCY and THE ALIEN DEAD, trouble is they were unintentionally funny, here though, Ray plumps for making a film intentionally funny-...I hope!

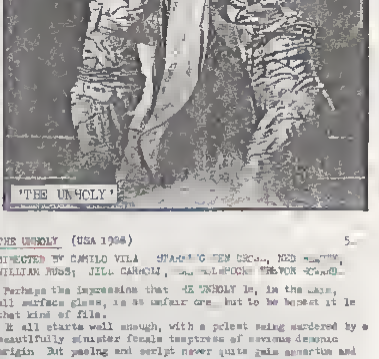
HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS, or rather HOLLYWOOD HOOKERS as our screen wants it retitled, is a totally naff and complete ly barmy detective yarn which has a P.I ("There's no rest for a dick in this town!") searching for a missing teenage girl, who it seems has fell in with a bizarre chainsaw worshipping cult who's anybody members (excuse the pun) are cutting their clients down to size with said implements.

The plot is as simplistic as is possible without being non-existant, just enough [illegible] to string together a few setpieces of naked bimbos swinging writhing males with their chainsaws. Harry Keenan and mainstream pals may frown on such a tweedsmare and inane plot, hell, I think even I could. If I was half awake when I saw it, but remarkably the heady mixture of hare, bouncing, female flesh, noisy, carving chainsaws and gallons of ketchup being slung around on everyone and everything like there's no tomorrow, actually works and though the film might not end up in the running for an award next year, it is enjoyable if hellishly undemanding entertainment.

Ok, afterall can resist a fi - with such highlights as Linnea Quigley jiggling her pussy, Jay Richardson lecturing on the religious significance of the chainsaw, seeing a naked, blood-splattered woman having her tits fondled by a severed hand (though the probability of this scene staying intact in the video version is somewhat unlikely), and let's not forget the classic virgin dance of the double chainsaws and the hero who's closing line on the heroine is "Boy, and had great tits."

You know what to expect.

— JOHN GILL



THE UNHOLY (USA 1988) 5.

DIRECTED BY CAMILO VILA. STARRING KEN OLSON, NED BEATTY, WILLIAM RUSS; JILL CARROLL, [illegible] HOLBROOK, TREVOR [illegible].

Perhaps the impression that THE UNHOLY is, in the case, all surface gloss, is as unfair one, but to be honest it is that kind of film.

It all starts well enough, with a priest being murdered by a beautifully sinister female temptress of obvious demonic origin. But pacing and script never quite gain momentum and the story only works in fits and starts. It could even be argued that without the movie's well above average cast, THE UNHOLY would hardly have been worth bothering with at all. Ken Crosa in the central role of Father Kiernan, the priest who it seems has been chosen to do battle with the powers of darkness, is very watchable and brings a certain amount of integrity to his character which is appreciated. In supporting roles the dependable Ned Holbrook as Archbishop Meaney has little to do but nevertheless is effective, and Ned Beatty on autopilot as a police detective adds credibility. Also a special nod should be given to the late Trevor Howard in one of his last film appearances as the kind Father Silva, giving an interesting portrayal, introducing a little eccentricity and colour to the proceedings. The two relative newcomers to the cast, Jill Carroll and William Russ who both enjoy a good deal of screen time are believable within the limitations of their characters and in all, the entire cast give a good account of themselves.

Director Vila, one feels, tries hard to inject some life into the story but only succeeds with his visuals intermittently, although both music and effects are reasonably well judged.

The plot which is a basic good versus evil approach does get a little out of hand at times, yet Ken Kesse's tow enterious re-shoot of the film a climax, seems to be over too quick, and contains little surprises, so one can only wonder just what it can have been like before he improved it.

Over all, THE UNHOLY is worth seeing and will not disappoint those in an indulgent mood, but are ardoil have been prejudiced from such encouraging glosses a, so reluctantly, I would have to be considered, at least myself, as a failure.

— MARK MORLEY.

SLAVE GIRLS FROM BEYOND INFINITY (USA 1987) COLOUREX 3

DIRECTED BY KEN WIXON STARRING ELIZABETH CAYTON, CONNY SEAL; DRINKS BREAKERS: ROD SIMONS.

First things first, and that is, that with a title as lurid as that, I think it would have been nice to have seen a few more slave girls, rather than the two we are served up with. Have say mental picture of Acting as the line of the title will be disappointed at the lack of nudity, but such is life. Next thing you notice, is that despite the general lack of budget, the film looks good, and the production values are very ambitious indeed. Unfortunately, that is about all you can say in the film's favour for the rest is pretty dire.

The plot shows the story of two scantily-clad, buxom blonde slave girls who escape from a prison ship, and crash land on a nearby planet, to be rescued by a mysterious handsome stranger, who along with his two robot servants lives in an impressive jungle castle retreat. Their best means of escape begin with, but when his other guests (from another crash), start to disappear one always, heroless beside something is afoot, and golly, if they're not right, because the best is infant taking his guests air into the jungle for a spot of hunting, trouble being, they are the hunted, and will about certainly be displayed beside the mouse-heads in the trophy room! (What do you mean there are no mouse on alien planets?)

Such a simple plot is dragged so far what seems like forever and the outcome is never in doubt, so its just a matter of time, and all you can do in the meantime, is amuse yourself by ogling the title speakers, or laughing at the ellarious comedy routines of the wacky robots. (I laughed until I stopped!) This I suspect won't be enough for most viewers, hell, it wasn't even enough for me, and I'll watch anything

— ELMER FUDMUCKER

CREEPOZOIDS (USA 1987) COLOUREX 5

DIRECTED BY DAVID DeCOCTEAU STARRING LINNEA QUIGLEY; KEN ABRAHAM; MICHAEL AMANDA, RICHARD HAWKINS

Bargain-basement alien aliens, that was originally released as half of a double-bill with SLAVE GIRLS FROM BEYOND INFINITY in the States.

It is the future, for a change, and the world has been thrown, yet again, into a state of nuclear holocaust, the tattered, war-torn planet surface is subject to constant showers of deadly toxic-rain, leaves any survivors are forced to take shelter in any available building. Enter our heroes, a quartet of army deserters, who during a particularly nasty thunderstorm take shelter in a seemingly deserted underground complex. I say seemingly deserted, because, naturally enough lurking around in the air-ducts is a big, unpleasant, hungry creature which does not hang around getting its teeth into the plucky heroes.

There's nothing new on offer here, though the crossover from ALIEN to post-apocalypse sub-genre is different, otherwise, predictable storyline and predictable setpieces. The creature apparently is the results of scientific research into amino acids for those who care, but I do find it a little hard to swallow that a monster of such size could fit into, let alone crawl around in such small air-ducts; for such a small budget the film does try hard, and certain scenes come off quite well, and there are a couple of somewhat highlights, such as Linnea Quigley's body, and the hideously inept rubber baby at the end which seems to have wandered in off the set of IT'S ALIVE. Despite the lovely Miss in the video sleeve, I don't really think anyone expected this to be another ALIENS, and if you die then you've a lot to learn, but as a cheap rip-off, yes would do worse

— STEVE CHAMBERS.

BAD DREAMS (USA 1987) 4

DIRECTED BY ANDREW FLEMING STARRING RICHARD LYNCH; JENNIFER RUBIN, BRUCE ABBOTT HARRIS YULIN

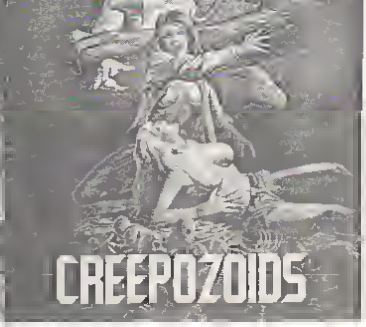
Andrew Fleming directors this semi-ish psychic thriller about a weird hippie cult led by a maniac called Harris, played very well by Richard Lynch. Harris has gained control over his followers to the point that believe death is nothing more than an extension of life. One day Harris dosses over one with gasoline including himself, and sets their house on fire. Everyone burns up except for Cynthia (Jennifer of ELM ST 3 fame) who miraculously escapes be inferno. Cynthia wakes up from a coma of thirteen years and begins seeing images of Harris, he is a burned up, hideous looking character that Cynthia is uncertain as to whether is a hallucination or a real ghost. Seen mysterious bloody deaths start to occur and Harris appears to be responsible according to Cynthia. One couple in one of the better scares scenes gets chopped up in an air vent fan and blown out through a duct in a bloody graphic scene, but on the whole there is nothing really that gory or even scary in BAD DREAMS, except perhaps for some of the make up effects for Harris.

Since the audience does not find out until the very end what is behind all the strange happenings in hospital, the movie is pretty successful, who new Harris is actually responsible all the carnage, or if he is just a hallucination of Cynthia is the focus of the story.

The makeup work is very good, and for mystery fans the ending should be very satisfying, not for gorehounds, I'm afraid you're in for a disappointment with this answer, but nearly bloodless film. Richard Lynch would not be more perfect for the role of Harris, but on the whole, I found BAD DREAMS to be a very overrated film.

Wait for the next ELM STREET installment for your real bad dream and let this one pass

— ROD SIMONS



976-EVIL (USA 1988) 1.

DIRECTED BY ROBERT ENGLUND, STARRING STEPHEN GEOFFREYS: JIM METZLER, MARIA RUSSELL; LESLIE DEANE, J.J.COHEN

I really can't find anything positive to say about this film, well, other than to nullify lechers that a young blonde female heroine does display her stocking tops several times.

Englund seems incapable of deciding who is the central character, and so the emphasis keeps switching from one person to another, leaving the production uncentred. The narrative lacks any drive; the tale blackly dragging on for what (for us) seems like ages.

The make-up is laughable; Geoffreys, as the possessed youth (Evil) sports a pair of Spock ears and a closed hand that wouldn't go amiss in a seventy shop window display

The optical/audio effects, during the climax, are well received, but don't help the Movie, infact they serve only to help the flick more ludicrous (Hell appears outside of Geoffrey's house.)

Englund is new refilming some of the scenes, ..don't bother mate, just allow a real director to do it!

- KEN MILLER

SLUGS - THE MOVIE (USA/SPAIN 1987) 0 or 10

DIRECTED BY JUAN PIQUER SIMON STARRING MICHAEL GARFIELD, KIM TERRY; PHILLIP MACHALES, ALICIA MORO SANTIAGO

Unlike 976-EVIL, which is simply bad, this selluse manic savie is awful...but bloody funny too!

This film really had the crowd guffawing at it's unintentionally funny dialogue and acting during its screening at the 2nd 'Shock around the Clock' sexploitation festival. From a slug attacking an old guy from within a gardening glove (in a greenhouse that evoolvally explodes!), to a close-up of a slug equipped with a mouth-full of teeth(!), this inept tale piles on the laughs. The knowledgeable scientist is played by an actor who seems almost brain-dead. Whilst in the opening scene set on a land, the slugs seeches manage to pull a girl under the water(man they swim in a pack?), these critters are obviously JAWS fans!

Oh yeah, slugs are not the only slimy things on show, there are also some worm/slver type creatures too, which, in one scene, burst out of a bloke's mouth at a restaurant.

Watch and laugh!

- KEN MILLER

LUNCHMEAT (USA 1986) 3.

DIRECTED BY KIRK ALEX. STARRING CHUCK SLATE; MITCH ROGERS; ELROY WIESE; KIM McKAY, MARIE RUTICKA

Much hyped low budget slaughtar film which was brought together on an absolute minimum budget, and has met with some degree of praise from genre critics

The plot to this one is as threadbare as they come, with a group of touring teenagers being unfortunate enough to come across a demented backwoods family who scramble logs per a living by selling meats in a local diner (sounds familiar?) and would you credit it, the secret ingredient is, of course, human! We are introduced to both parties simultaneously, and it doesn't take too long before the real sadism gets unsteady and the tourists have been lured from the beaten track by a bogus diversion sign, and are subsequently ambushed by the loony clan. These who aren't killed straight off, in the opening melee, are pursued for the remainder of the film

About all the savie has to offer, in reality, is some pretty sloppy gore and a great amount of brutality and cruelty to the victims. This is one unpleasant film, relishing in the savagery of the cannibal family, and is surprisingly sadistic for an American film, such unashamed barbarity is usually rare skin to the Italian film industry. Here you really get the impression that the victims are suffering, take for example the guy who gets the pick-axe lodged through his foot, as his assailant tries to free the weapon to finish him off, but can't do so, and as a result stands around, twisting the tool in the guy's foot, as he yelps out in agony and the lame's the girl who receives the hideously brutal death at the hands of the father of the family who repeatedly attacks her with his machete until and is dead, harrowing stuff! Director Alex has gone to great pains to publicise the film, even going as far as to write articles on the trials and tribulations of putting it together, for such mags as 'Shock Express' However, though his efforts should be honoured as like so many independent film-makers, the film was a labour of love, the simple fact is, that the film is pretty lousy, being sexploitat to such a degree that it totally re-shoots the climax of TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, and is so repellant in nature that it becomes an unpleasant experiences to view...

One can only hope that for his next film venture, THE BUTCHER KEY DOOR, that Alex manages to gain a touch of humanity and originality, though with a title like that, I somehow doubt it

HYBRIS (USA, TEAM UNKNOWN) IN HOUSE 7 ..5

DIRECTED BY BOB BARTON STARRING MARSHALL CRAMER; WADE POPWELL; PAUL GALLOWAY GERALD CHUSE, JANNA KIESHAUER

Obscure, and I mean, real obscure, horror yarn, which has surely rank as one of the worst films ever made, and through sheer ineptitude, (though it is pretty poor in that respect) but in the levels of other vulgar and sheer boredom it manages to.

We are greeted with a decidedly odd welcome-wagon of some chap lovingly dissecting an his beloved marine-life, and it seems the venue is that of the good old dessertee scientist, who's clothes were (as he always the case) laughed out of the lab by his colleagues, but now, after 20 (or 25, it tends to vary due to lack of continuity!) years, he is ready for his revenge. And what does this entail? Well basically, the old fool sets up a big pool full of electrodes and various wires, dumps in a few sexfish(?) and plonks himself in with them. The result being he materialises looking like a very cheap gill-man, who'd look much more at home in the black lagoon.

Well, all manner of tedium ensues, as the mad scientist, who manages to retain all his intelligence, despite being a walking sea-urchin, heads off to seek revenge on the busy-bodies who doubted him all those years ago.

The question arises, whilst viewing the film, that what on earth was the advantage of turning into a fish (besides being able to get fish fingers cheaply) as the scientists attempts to make a fishy female totally collapse, and all he seems able to do in his new-guise is scuba-dive without any apparatus...

This is indeed an odd film, and may sound quite promising from its plot, but the fact is nothing happens, I mean this is no slow film (a scene of the scientist climbing some stairs takes up about three minutes of the running time!) The rubber suit isn't too bad, though there's no danger of Rick Baker be sing his secar to it, but everything else is excruciatingly dull, to top point that you either hit the fast-forward button or turn off. Searching the redeemed qualities of video shelves for the obscurities more so this may seem like a fun idea at the time, but the fact is films because obscure for a reason, and unfortunately HYBRIS is a flat case in point.

- JOHN HILL.

INVASION OF THE BODYSNOCKERS USA 1987' 7

DIRECTED BY WILLIAM FREUT STARRING TERY BALLARD; JOHN VERNON; CONROY WALSH; SUSAN ANSPACH, JOHN BIKE.

The poster for this looks as if it's advertising one of those old B movies from the fifties that pop up on TV from time to time, and pleasantly enough that's exactly what it is. Director William Freut was obviously decided on a change of pace from his previous efforts (DEATH WISHERS, SPARKS etc) and has made a fun film on the tradition of cloned and green enlargement fare of all those of us who love the monster from outer space threatens ordinary present-day all-American town' essencis. Not an awful lot of body sucking actually goes on (in fact I didn't notice any) but what the hell, it makes a good little for this enjoyable rubbish.

An old guy scratches himself on a strange new plant' and almost instantly collapses. He gets rushed off to the local hospital where the most of the female staff look like Playboy models. No wonder has he been made early in a hospital bed when a huge slimy maggot crawls its way out of his mouth. Amidst the uproar this causes, enter Detective Steve Railsback with his wounded partner who gives him an excuse to stay in the hospital for the rest of the picture, which is just as well because where would a savie be without its cop here?

The maggot is put in a glass jar and left alone in a laboratory so that it can be freed by some totally unknowns children who also happen to find it growth hormones! It grows into a huge bug-eyed insect that promptly sneaks off to the hospital boiler room where it spends its time looking after the female insect that it keeps inside its body (yes that's right!) until she is ready to lay eggs. An science entomologist is brought in , who (of course) wants to keep the creature alive, while all this is happening more people are coming down with symptoms similar to the first victim and the hospital is quarantined, with orders from the government for the place to be bombed if a cure can't be found within the next two hours. You can guess the rest yourself, by only remarks being that the little kids don't get ill, but then that would be out of place in a film such as this

Fortunately the whole thing isn't played tongue-in-cheek, sure, everyone overacts and underacts as the case may be, but they all manage to keep a straight face. Freut keeps things moving at a cracking pace and the monster effects by Steve Neill, while a bit dated, are totally in keeping with the traditions of the thing, especially the bit near the end where the dodgy bug chases Railsback through the hospital. Oh and we get the customary promise of a sequel once the end. All in all, a good laugh - and don't forget the popcorn!

COMBAT SHOCK (USA 1986)

DIRECTED BY BERNT GIOVIRAZZO, STARRING RICKY GIOVIRAZZO, MITCH MAGLIO, VERONICA SHOCK, ASHLY LIVONI

The recent spate of 'Nam' movies such as PLATOON and FULL METAL JACKET have finally brought to the attention of the world, the sheer brutality and pointlessness of America's involvement in the war in South east Asia, and proving, to coin a phrase, that war is indeed hell. But the horrors of modern warfare didn't end when the U.S. armed forces pulled out, and the scars of the conflict left on its protagonists is where this remarkable film takes over. COMBAT SHOCK, thanks to its independent, low budget roots is allowed to go further, dig deeper, and show in hideous detail what mainstream movies like PLATOON, fine movie that it may be, can only hint at.

Fighting, killing, maiming, agent orange and torture cages were the easy part!...

COMBAT SHOCK is a purposely depressing film, mean and brutal yet compulsive in its portrayal of a man tipped over the edge by his experiences in the war and the horrors of the concrete jungle he is now imprisoned in. Ricky G, as the credits identify him, portrays Frankie, a pittiful vet, who wringes a meagre existance in his New York slum home. His wife is constantly nagging she is hungry and fed up with their life, his baby is a hideously deformed offspring, which constantly cries out, and is twisted due to Frankie being sprayed with an unspecified chemical back in Nam. He aimlessly wanders the streets, desperate for the opportunity to get a job, and feed his family. While all along, becoming more desperate, more disturbed, more dangerous.

The conclusion to COMBAT SHOCK is suitably downbeat with Frankie offing his family with a gun, sticking the baby in the oven, and finally turning the pistol on himself. The movie offers no solution to the problems, and these are real problems, for the film was based on similar events of ex-soldiers destroying themselves and their kindred. The film doesn't just seek to show the fatality of a single veteran, but all the people who reside in the squalor and degravity of the inner cities. Pimps, child prostitutes, staggering junkies, all are included here in an ultra-seedy TAXI DRIVER scenario. The film can also boast some of the most disturbing scenes of any movie, with its hideous drugs sequence, forgetting all those wimpy government commercials, you want putting off drugs, then just watch the guy who jacks up his terribly bruised and bleeding veins with a syringe! Such nasauts, and the fact the film is being handled by Troma, may make COMBAT SHOCK sound like a cheap and exploitive nasty, which is so far from the truth. This is a ferociously intelligent and desperate movie, with explicit violence, which for once is justified, be warned, this film pulls absolutely no punch as, its a harrowing and intense viewing experience, but one you won't forget in a hurry. Perhaps why the American mainstream critics hated the film so much is that it is an unsanpumiling slice of truth, and as the expression goes 'truth hurts'. I must conclude by saying I did not enjoy COMBAT SHOCK. I didn't sit back and revel in the gore, unlike certain B.S. mags have done, but I did appreciate what was being said, I doubt however if our censorship board will, so don't hold your breath for this sini-classic to open here.

-JOHN HILL

RAMBO III (USA 1988) 5.

DIRECTED BY PETER MACDONALD.
STARRING SYLVESTOR STALLONE, RICHARD CRENNA

Severely disappointing entry in the series, which has proved a shock failure at the box-office on both sides of the Atlantic. With the Reagan administration finally coming to a close it seems the tough-guy movie as typified by the RAMBO series will be disappearing with it, as exemplified by the failure this film was met with. Apart from the film coming at the end of the era that spawned it, it is also considerably untimely in that it has that one-man war-machine John Rambo heading off to Afghanistan to wipe out a few thousand pesky Soviets, the fact that the Russians are currently pulling their troops out of the country further goes to mess up the whole situation, as does the new feeling of friendship between the Soviet and American nations.

Despite these unforseeable problems, the film could still have been (like its predecessor) an all-action spectacle, but despite having an immense budget (60 million dollars if the reports are correct) the film is dull, livening up only for an admittedly strong climax, where Rambo is a Russian tank runs the hand Russian bad guy who is in his helicopter gunship at the time! Such absurdist, non-stop action was what made the previous film so successful, but far more recent the film is low on action, and high on heroism. One can only wonder what original director Russell Mulcahy would have made of this but it was Stallone whose ego disposed of him, and now it is Sly who must live with the fact that his famous creation is all but finished.

It will be interesting indeed to see where such movies go from here, and if there is in fact a future for them, but RAMBO III stands, all it has to offer is a few scattered pyrotechnics, a running battle at the close and unfortunately little else, not even any controversy in the press!

- JOHN HILL

THE PRESIDIO (USA 1988) 6.

DIRECTED BY PETER HYAMS STARRING SEAN CONNERY; MARK HARMON, MEG RYAN

In this 20 million dollar film from Paramount, Connery and Harmon (recently seen in SUMMER SCHOOL, and the underrated LOU'S GET HARDY), are tossed up to investigate a murder that occurs on a military base, called, Presidio, no less.

Connery plays the stiff upper-lip, no-army, I do everything by the book, character, whilst the likeable Harmon takes the role of a local detective and also ex-soldier, who is prone to bend the rules every so often. To make matters worse, Harmon falls for Connery's daughter, played by Meg Ryan, who when we first see her, is standing on her front porch, wearing a T-shirt and no bra, tight, she makes heins in it. (Someone pass the sedatives! - Ed)

To be fair, the film is a routine story full of undercover agents, drugs, murder and sex takes see scene, which I hasten to add is rather disappointing considering the talent involved. Unfortunately we've all seen the same theme of two opposite characters suddenly pitted against each other, who end up buddies, such as in LETHAL WEAPON, and the upcoming RED HEAT (to be reviewed next issue -Ed).

On the plan side, the film does contain films performances from all three leads, and director Hymes (ZOMBIE, RUNNING SCARED) does offer a spectacular chase, on foot, through San Francisco's Chinatown

The film was received quite well in the States in the Summer, and it will be interesting to see if it repeats that success ever here when it opens next year.

– JONATHAN ENGLENDER

PROMISED LAND (USA 1987) VESTRON 4

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL HOFFMAN. STARRING KIEFER SUTHERLAND MEG RYAN JASON GEDRICK TRACY POLLAN

A hit dilemma as to whether to cover this or not, but it stars Meg Ryan, so try stopping us!

Very well made 'rights of passage' film, which has Sutherland and Gedrick as two school buddies looking towards the future, Sutherland is heading off to a job in Arizona, Gedrick to a basketball scholarship at college. What in fact happens, is that both fail to reach as their dreams, and Sutherland becomes unsettling of a wandering delinquent led astray by his wild girlfriend Bev (Ryan), whilst Gedrick has become a man back in his hometown. And one Christmas back home, both parties meet up again, one on each side of the law, and the only outcome is at the end of a gun. But who dies? I'll not say, but if you really want the plot ruining, then read the review in Video The Mag.

This is a very intelligent film, made with maximum wholeness and the characterisations across the board are superb. The climax is powerful, but not overtly bloody, but I don't want to hype the film for the wrong reasons, because the violent moment of gore at the end are the last thing I'd recommend the movie for. What I would commend are, the fine cinematography, quality acting and well told plot, which is based on a true story. And then of course there's the wonderful Meg Ryan, here sporting tattoos, red hair (at first) and a witness of foul language

Worth a look when you're in the mood for a change.

– JOHN HILL

NIGHTMARES (USA 1987) TBS/FOX. 4

DIRECTED BY T C BLAKE. STARRING CATHARINE MARY STEWART, MICHAEL FRAED, LISA HOUNT, JOHN STANNING, JAMES AVERY

Ill fated adaptation of the George R R Martin novella, which actually owes more to another famous science fiction novelist, namely Arthur C Clarke and 2001. Have a group of scientists discover the spaceship they have boarded for an expedition is in fact alive and hostile. You see, the captain of the vessel, Fraed (the original 'Robin of Sherwood'), has been imprisoned somewhere for 30 years, unable to leave due to the over-powering control of his mother (and lover?) who has seemingly managed to enter her soul into the programming of the ship's controls! Indeed this is quite a mixed up movie, which has apparently undergone various production difficulties, and if the director's real name is T C Blake, then my cock's a kipper.

The visual efforts are absolutely top-notch, and there are a couple of explicit gore efforts, including a real neat head lancering, which leaves the victim minus everything above the bottom jaw! However, this doesn't deter him from running around later on in the movie to terrorize his crew mates. A bit slow and uninventful on the whole, but worth a look on a rainy day, but make sure the video shop shelves have nothing better to offer first.

Nowhere, how about getting things sorted out, and some entertaining soul filming Martin's superbly scary short story 'Sandkings'?

– STEVE CHAMBERS.

SUNDAY THE 13TH 7 (USA 1986) 5

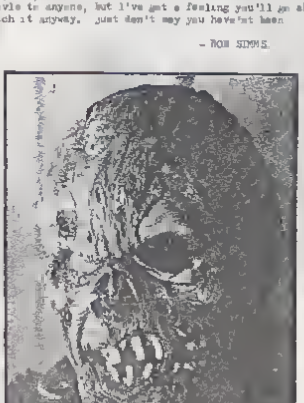
DIRECTED BY JOHN SOBCHLER. STARRING LAR PARK LINCOLN MARK ROBERT .

John Buechler('TROLL, GOBLIN DWELLER') directs the sixth sequel to the classic original which still stands as the best so far. Last time out Jason was brought back to life by lightning, and this time a young lady named Tina accidentally brings him back from the bottom of Crystal Lake using her weakenedk psychic powers. She was actually trying to bring her father back who she killed by using the pier he was standing on six years earlier. Why her father was left at the bottom of the lake – only one of the many holes in this most outrageous plot

Tina has been brought back to Crystal Lake after being confined to an institution by her mother and devious doctor. The doctor thinks it might help her to come to grips with the tragedy she caused. Very soon Jason comes out of the lake and starts his relentless killing spree once more

This sequel has many laughs and stretches the Jason theme to the limits, he must have had a hardware store nearby the woods because almost every death scene is with a brand new hardware implement right off the shelf. My favourite scene though doesn't involve any axe, hatchet or clever tool, but has a girl hiding in a sleeping bag, but Jason simply picks it up, and whirls it around smashing it against a tree. The story idea of 'Carrie meets Jason' is not bad, but the usual fillers calling a are come so drastically it's hard to ever ever call this a good film. The final confrontation between Tina and Jason is pretty well done and the makeup job on Jason is different and quite effective. However, the contrived conclusion is so stupid and totally unbelievable that this has to be one of the worst sequels of all. Almost totally void of gore, this is merely an unashamed cash-in. For serious horror fans these movies are an embarrassment to the genre, and under no circumstances could I recommend this movie to anyone, but I've got a feeling you'll go ahead and watch it anyway. Just don't say you haven't been warned

– ROB SIDNEY.



THE NEW LOOK JASON, 'FRIDAY'

SPACE ISLAND (ITALY 1987) 3

DIRECTED BY ANTONIO MARGHERETI. STARRING ANTHONY QUINN, ERNEST BORGNINE, DAVID WARBECK, JOHN BORGHEN, JIM HAWKINS.

SPACE ISLAND is an inter-stellar version of Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island', it's also one of those dreaded Italian TV co-productions and stars has-beens Quinn (as Long John Silver) and Borgnine. Plenty of reasons there to steer clear, you may think, but the film actually begins in impressive style due to high production values. The depiction of a futuristic Rome-Naples Megalopolis is particularly memorable.

Perversely enough, considering director Margheretti's long track record in science-fiction films (not so perversely perhaps, if you're familiar with any of them) SPACE ISLAND only starts sinking fast when everyone takes off in what looks like a flying Big Mac and arrive in an Italian forest masquerading as an alien planet. From here on, interminable scenes of people wandering around doing nothing are the order of the day, building the film's running time up to a whopping 110 minutes!

One's interest is briefly aroused by the presence of John Borghen an Lerman Hands, and as has been usual of late, he is in restrained form, though even on his best behaviour Johnny manages to stab Jim Hawkins in the neck! That other Italian horror stalwart David Warbeck looks rather the worse for wear closely resembling Jack Nicholson after THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK had finished with him!

Oh well, it was shaping up nicely there for a while, they must have run out of time or money or something or perhaps Margheretti just lost interest

'Yo Ho Ho and a Flatful of Crap (!?)'

– JOHN MARTIN.

THE NEST (USA 1981) 7.

DIRECTED BY TERENCE H. WINKLESS. STARRING LAWRENCE LISA LANGLOIS, ALEX [illegible] DAVIES

Good fun indeed is this [illegible] the invasion insect film, here the [illegible] insects are meat-eating cockroaches (genetically engineered, and care-away, allowed to escape of course...). The setting, an island, will doubtless wash adds to the atmosphere of the surprisingly good little film. Time is taken to properly introduce the characters, which makes a change, and we at least feel a bit of sympathy for them once they begin to get cooped down to the bone by the army of roaches. The plot may be second-hand and quite predictable, but the whole affair is handled with a touch of class, the direction is capable, the cast approach the proceedings seriously, Lisa Langlois makes a pretty heroine, and of most note, the effects are very good indeed. The gore levels are high, and seen remarkably intact, and watch out for the fabulous "Queen roach" creation, a very imaginative beast. And for those who missed the release of Cronenberg's FLY, you can catch it frame for frame in this movie, when Langlois transforms into a bug, before having his brains blown out!

Most enjoyable.

- JOHN HILL.

EXORCISM (SPAIN 1974) [illegible] 3.

DIRECTED BY JUAN BOSCH. STARRING PAUL NASCHY, MARIA PERSCHY, MARIA YOSHI

EXORCISM can stand as an example of two strands of seventies horror, the Paul Naschy film and the EXORCIST rip-off. The film opens with some awful 70s music (too heavy on the guitar) as we see a blood sacrifice taking place by the sea, with even the obligatory skull putting in an appearance. Following the beach party, Richard and Leila drive back to town, only to be involved in an accident which puts Leila in hospital. Enter Leila's brother, John; he believes that Richard, using ideas he picked up in the sinful continent of Africa, is leading his sister astray. She is even beginning to act rebelliously! John does the only decent thing and turns to his priest, which brings us our hero - Naschy.

The film continues to introduce a number of other characters including lovely stepmother Patricia, the weird bald-headed chauffeur who enjoys fondling Leila's underwear- before it starts killing them off... (I take it the film kill them off, not the underwear? -EM) This is usually achieved by twisting the victim's neck round, a punishment the devil reserved for unfaithful witches... Finally, after what seems an eternity (unless you succumb to the sensible urge to press the fast-forward button) we reach the exercise.

The thunder, sun the lights going out, and the candles. However, what we do not get is levitation, vomiting of green bile or rotating heads. Merely, a couple of splashes of holy water.

The narrative and continuity are not exactly smooth, and the film does not have the dazzling beauty that Dario or Freda might have provided. Neither is there any gore, suspense, or intelligent thought. Perhaps all these missing ingredients are to be found in the slightly longer 88 minute version. I somehow doubt it though.

So what do you get? Pedestrian direction, a modicum of sex and great dollops of boredom.

- DAVID (BAZ) BARRACLOUGH.

MANIAC COP (USA 1987) 7.

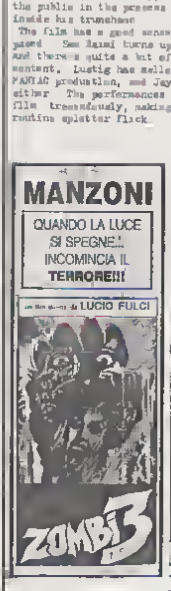
DIRECTED BY WILLIAM LUSTIG. STARRING TOM ATKINS, BRUCE CAMPBELL, LAURENE LANDON, RICHARD ROUNDTREE, ROBERT ZDAR.

The technical credits give you some idea of what to expect from this zesty horror piece: directed by William Lustig (MANIAC), produced by James Glickenhaus (THE EXTERMINATOR) and written by Larry Cohen (countless cheesy but fun exploitation pictures). The cast isn't bad either, with Tom Atkins, who seems to be in everything these days, and Ash himself, the indestructible, Bruce Campbell. The question is, does all this talent actually add up to a good picture? Well (hopefully the answer is yes - at least if for an good exploitation movies go.

As the story opens we see a typical pretty young thing being pursued down a deserted street by a couple of thugs, anticipating a gratuitous rape scene it's great to see her beat these guys up with her handbag and make good her escape. Still being pursued, she runs into the seemingly safe arms of a policeman, but not so, as he promptly kills her. The Atkins is assigned to the case, and Campbell plays a cop who becomes the chief suspect when his wife is found murdered after they've had an argument. The killings continue and Campbell, with his policewoman girlfriend in tow, sets out to prove his innocence. It turns out that the killer is an ex-cop who was sent to prison for using a bit too enthusiastic on the job. Beaten up and knifed by the inmates, most of whom he'd sent there himself, he was left for dead. Saved by the prison doctor who performed the autopsy and smuggled him out of the penitentiary, he's now back for revenge on the people who put him away, doing in various innocent members of the public in the process with the knife he keeps concealed inside his truncheon.

The film has a good sense of humour and is extremely well paced. Sam Raimi turns up in a cameo role as a TV reporter and there's quite a lot of splatter to keep the gorehounds content. Lustig has mellowed since the excesses of his 1980 MANIAC production, and Jay Chattaway's music score isn't too either. The performances of the main characters elevate the film tremendously, making it a bit more than just another routine splatter flick.

- JOHN L. PROSSER.



Die dunkle Seite des Bösen

'RETRIBUTION'

by Bradley Barton.

RETRIBUTION (USA 1987) 7-

DIRECTED BY GUY MADER STARRING MICHAEL LIPSCOMB, LORELEI WILD, HOYT AXTON, SUZANNE SNYDER, JEFF POMERANTZ

RETRIBUTION starts off well and pretty much sustains your interest throughout.

Plotwise, the story concerns the unfortunate George Miller (played fairly well by Lipscomb, who resembles me vaguely of Jack Lemmon!), an unsuccessful artist, who on attempting to commit suicide, somehow has he soul of a murder victim transferred into his body. So when he recovers, the poor chap finds himself possessed by an entity who is intent on revenge.

As director, Mader, does a very credible job with the occasionally flash of imaginative style, and is greatly aided by a strong and compelling musical score by John Carpenter's long time collaborator Alan Howarth. The effects by Kevin Yagher are also well done and although the script which was co-written by Mader and Lee Wasserman, is a little limited to its scope, but within its limitations, the movie consistently entertains. It may be true that this film is no masterwork, but perhaps if a greater proportion of genre movies were of this reasonably high standard, fans of the genre would be better served by the film-makers who supposedly set out to entertain us.

Generally speaking, RETRIBUTION is a cut above average and deserves an audience who will appreciate its efforts and not expect anything too ambitious.

MARK HOCKLEY

OPERA (ITALY 1987) 6-

DIRECTED BY DARIO ARGENTO STARRING CRISTINA MARSILLACH; MARIA MICOLICHI, URBANO BARBERINI; CORALINA CAPALDI TASSONI

I must admit to begin with, that I'm not an Argento fan, but I confess it, I liked OPERA'

The plot (this is an man, of Argento's films) is very weak with the usual heavy-breathing killer, who here has a love-hate relationship with his female victim, in this case, the opera singer Betty. She is tied up by the mystery psycho, and in the film's most startling image, has a row of needles placed in front of her eyes so she cannot close them, and in this dreadful position must watch her friends tortured and killed by the murderer. The pinned-eyes idea is truly resistin and convincing, it is just what a real maniac would do, a fine, subtle example of a twisted mind. Argento really plays on the pinned-eyes, giving the obvious metaphor of caged animals, and one wonders if this is'nt the way Argento wants the cinema audience to view the film, assuming they don't miss a single minute of the action'

The ending(s) of the film is very weak, and makes you recall PHENOMENA because of the Bolse setting, but overall the plot plays very such second fiddle to the outrageous gore set-pieces and the photographic flair and style. There are so many examples of technical capabilities, but often they have no reasoning, the camera merely runs around, zooms in on its subject, flies away again, only to show how Argento is able to master it.

As reported in the last issue, OPERA has been separated into two versions in italy, and the cuts occur in either two or three scenes according to which source you believe. The first cut occurs when the killer slashes Betty's boyfriend, we see the knife going in the throat and among! - with a horrible jump to the soundtrack (once again heavy-metal - bring back the Goblins!) gone is the concluding scene of the blade bursting through the guy's mouth. The other cut scene is when Tassoni (The new Argento Fiamma, who recently starred in CLUTCH - PRESA TERACE, one of the most poorly received movies at Rome's 'Fantafestival', apparently the response was so bad, Coralina ran from the theatre in tears') accidentally ingests the killers anklet and as the crazy guy opens up her mouth with some scissors to retrieve it; The final cut appears when the killer washes an unhere head against a wall, which contains an very nasty protruding nail, such. You may detect from all this that the film is pretty gory, and you'd be right, it is exceptionally violent, and as there is no real plot to speak of to break things up, the film seems even more graphic.

Argento's next film will be UNDICI (ELEVEN) a magic number for a story about voodoo and witchcraft on a tropical island, an unusual idea for Argento, and maybe it will be pretty different from the sad stesher film which OPERA so well typifies.

- MAX BELLA MOHA

WAXWORK (USA 1988) 4.

DIRECTED BY ANTHONY HICKOX STARRING ZACH GALLIGAN; DEBORAH FOREMAN, MICHELLE JOHNSON; MILES O'KEEFE; JOHN REYS DAVIES, PATRICK MACNEE, DAVID WARNER

Set (mainly) within a mysterious wax museum, this is a prime example of a good idea gone disastrously wrong.

The film seems unable to decide on a theme, and constantly moves into different concepts; a possible idea when done well but in this case, simply an irritation. Starting out as an anthology film, it then becomes a missing teens yarner, before finally ending up as an astoundingly unfunny spoof.

The tragic thing is, that in parts, WAXWORK is quite good. The opening, about a vampiric family, is haunting, unsettling and extremely gruesome, and the appearance of the Marquis De Sade and the pinheads of past also caught my attention, but these moments were brief. For the most part, the film alternates between tedium and irritation.

Even the surprising amount of splattery violence fails to move the film, because it has the unmountable handicap of featuring the most nauseating characters ever seen in a horror film. The dunbluck teenage of FRIDAY THE 13TH are saints from heaven in comparison to these hideous people, who's presence seems to be a last-ditch attempt to sell the movie to the TEENIE BOPPER imbecile audience. These assholes are supported by hammy, take-the-money-and-run performers like Warner and Meacnee.

This one's a stiff ... forget it!

- DAVID WLIKT

POLTERGEIST III (USA 1988) 7.

DIRECTED BY GARY SHERMAN STARRING TOM SKERITT; NANCY ALLEN, HEATHER O'ROURKE; JULIA MONTEMELA; NATHAN DAVIS

A new director, a new location, a new story. Then there is a bag, and wahdya get? POLTERGEIST III. Taking its cue from it's predecessors, III is remarkably thin on plot. Carol Anne has gone to live with Uncle Bruce and Aunty Patricia in a new films/residential skyscraper. The Uncle (Skeritt) seems to be in charge of the building, though his actual job never becomes entirely clear, and the Aunty (Allen), runs an exhibition centre. It does'nt take long, for Kane [Davis] the preacher from part ii to find Carol A[illegible] and start a[illegible] trouble. And that is the story [illegible] say, it's a bit thin [illegible] Julia Montemela [illegible] scientists as things in a much reduced part, to rid C.A. [illegible] the nasties, and is wonderful as ever. The scene where [illegible] turns up at the [illegible] and completely takes charge is superb.

The plot's occasionally obvious, down to the basement parking lot, where Carol Anne and friends get pulled to the other side, I met a mile off. That said, I did notice jumps from other audience members, so I suppose it worked for the semi-minimal horror viewer. The effects are very impressive, especially as they were all shot live, rather than optically super-imposed. The make-up is top-notch, watch out for Zelda's incredible breakthrough, but by far the best are the mirror effects which feature very strangely and provide most of the shocks. Some of these will really freak you out. Only slightly irritating was the abundance of dry ice and coloured lighting, hell that's nit-picking!

I was disappointed by the ending, not really to expect a big showdown, and it just doesn't happen. It all hinges on love as well, which is a big minus being the cynical old git I am. Still, this alone better than JI's ending which made me cored when I saw it. Writer/director Sherman has come up with some wonderful incidental characters, watch out for O.A.'s music teacher and the school handle wife, they had me in stitches. The main characters are also well written, and very well played, it was a shame that there was to be a group of partying teenagers though...

POLTERGEIST III is a very different film to the first two but both to the change of setting, and new style of effects, it deserves to do well...

- RICHARD GRIFFITHS.

RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD II (USA 1987) 5.

DIRECTED BY KEN WIENERNORNS STARRING JAMES KAREN; THEM MATHEWS, DANA ASHBROOK, MARSHA DIETLEIN, PHILIP ROTHS

Could I expect any good from what was to affect a remake of a sequel to the 1968 classic NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD? RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD was original and had its own means tagged BUILD 2 however, just seems across as a cossy reworking of part one, clumsily repeating some of the situations as if nobody would notice... Okay so it's a sort of in-joke homage for Karen and Mathews to go through the rigor mortis routine all over again (here they play two grave-robbers, Joey and Ed who while hunting for souvenir skulls become knocked by the tear gas), but this time the routine is not funny. Ed means his way through the part, and after severe irritation I for saw was glad of his eventual demise.

A young lad Joey, and his friends discover some of the missing mannequins from part 1 in an old sewage pipe and accidentally activate the thing. Out comes the 'tar man' (who is promptly pushed over a cliff in a thoroughly weak scene) and a whole valuum of the mesmerizing gas, which we you'd expect drifts onto the nearby cemetery. Joey, his sister, the cable TV repair boy, and an old Dan hustle the living dead who are once again looking for fresh brains while the army prepare to make a better job of the situation than to the last one.

Though this sounds much like the lineage of plots, some of the film was quite clever. There was a good atmosphere during the initial dead-have-risen episodes which worked also in a comic way. The dead struggle out of their graves as if they'd just woken up, some fall into open graves, others have their heads and fingers stepped on as they try to climb out and one short-sighted zombie gives a sigh as she places her glasses on her nose. Some of the grosser moments work because of their comedic element. When Sam thumps one of the living dead in the mouth her hand sprints straight through its head, and at another point a zombified boy with braces on his teeth twiss into his mum's head to an awful metallic crunching sound! However, it came as no surprise that as the whole the comedy is predictable and awkward. Why do little boys always have to squeak lowly at horrific moments? Why do we have to have yet more Michael Jackson/Thriller jokes? (Though I still laughed at the mushin in that who comes from the manholes... what was he doing down there?)

The character of the doctor comes out best, as he gets the best lines, and copes with the situation with the common sense that none of the other characters have. To find out if the porter at the hospital is a zombie or not, he asks over the intercom, who is the president of the USA. The zombie replies "Harry Truman!"

Special effects are up to standard (apart from the tar barrel man), especially where a zombie, cut in half, continues to walk around, and the head dangling entrails, the other half clumping around with its spinal chord wriggling in the air!

Irritating far out of its time, but with some good moments. Disappointing, and on the whole shoddy and thrown together. Do we really need remakes of sequels anyway?

- NICK CARRS

THE MINDER (USA 1987) 9.

DIRECTED BY JACK SHOLDER STARRING KYLE MACLACHLAN, MICHAEL MORRI; CLAUDIA CHRISTIAN CLARENCE FELDER

An alien insect least seems free one human host to another in its bid to finally get inside, and thus control a figure of power and authority. If the bug's present victim gets damaged (i.e. shot to pieces) it makes the dying human vomit out the creature into another person's gullet. On the trail of the nasty ET is a hard boiled cop (Maurl) tracking, the a youthful Bradford Billman) and a young man who claims to be a government agent, but to be? (Maclaughlan)

This movie is an enjoyable pacy SF actioner which really deals out the violence in a series of bloody shoot-ups.

As with NOMOCOP, THE MINDER does it rely solely on the action, and, in this case, scenes of an alien character attempting to relate to the cop's family life in a pleasing counterpoint to the monsoon bouts of gun-play.

Fast, funny, frightening and full of thrills, THE MINDER is a genuine crowd-pleaser, and the ending is really neat too!

- KEN MILLER

A CLOSE RELATIVE OF ELMER FUDPUCKER, 'THE MONSTER SQUAD'.

THE MONSTER SQUAD (USA 1987) 8

DIRECTED BY FRED DEKKER STARRING ANDRE GOWER; ROBERT KIGER; DUNCAN REGEHR, JACK GWILLIM; TOM HOGNAN

Fred (NIGHT OF THE GEEKS) Dekker directs this homage to the Universal canons of old with a fair deal of panache, which helps just to ignore the rather cliched GOONIESesque kiddies (one's a bling, one's a cool dude etc) that are the central characters.

The monsters are nicely realised by Stan Winston, I especially liked the Gill-man suit, though it's a pity that the baddies prove fairly easy to defeat (infact, the ritual at the end wasn't really needed as all the zombies had been bunged off already!)

THE MONSTER SQUAD criticise celeb, in an entertaining scene of fan file-asking that contains several nifty special effects scenes. A nice line was having Dracula shot whilst in bat form, this doesn't kill him, but for a moment, he is trapped in a kind of mid-way shape - half man 'n' half bat! Another good touch was having the wolfman re-assemble himself after being blown to bits. Of course, in werewolf lore, a suggestion couldn't kill it - so what the hell would happen if a stick of dynamite was passed into a wolfman's pants? This film makes you - all the bits slither back to one another and join back up again! A great party trick huh?

- KEN MILLER

SPLATTER SPOT.

SUBJECT BLOOD DINER

STATUS UNRELEASED IN UK.

CREDITS Directed by Jackie Kong.
Starring Rick Burks; Carl Crew;
Tanya Papanicolas;
Drew Goddard.

Female director Jackie Kong has previously made a couple of interesting, if unimportant films, namely THE BEING and NIGHT PATROL, both pretty jokey affairs, the former being a cheap toxic terror tale with Martin Landau and various other scenery chewers, the latter a tasteless POLICE ACADEMY style romp, with Linda Blair headlining.

With BLOOD DINER, Kong progresses slightly in scope to bring us another schlocky outing, full of blood, boobs 'n' bits, in fact the sort of contents you'd find in any good honest, second-rate exploitation pot-boiler, which is exactly where BLOOD DINER gets its inspiration, and especially the works of H.G.Lewis, which this is an unashamed tribute of.

Beginning with a flashback some twenty years previous, we are introduced to two small brothers, playing peacefully in their home, when over the radio airwaves comes a menacing broadcast of an escaped killer, claimed to have a cleaver in one hand and his genitals in the other!" No sooner does the message finish, than said loony crashes through the boy's door, cleaver aloft! "Hi, Uncle Anwar!" exclaims one of the lads, and so the tone of the film is perfectly set. Uncle Anwar lectures the boys to stay good, before heading outside to be gunned down by the police! We then progress to present day, and discover the two brothers running a succesful health food diner, no thanks to the fact that helping them out is Uncle Anwar's telepathic, pickled brain! And it is he who decides to celebrate an upcoming festival, by worshipping the Goddess Shestar, who must be built from the bodies of immoral women, before being rejuvinated, and brought back to life to reign supreme! This task is set about with great aplomb by the two lads, who first machine-gun down a team of topless aerobic dancers, whilst wearing Ronald Reegan masks! They then set about picking up sleazy women in tacky bars, whilst dressed in some supremely dodgy teddy-boy rags. Well, naturally Shestar does come back to life, for the blood-drenched cannibalistic disco finale. And after all that, if you still consider this a serious film, then God help you! And there's more, 'cos the film also boasts, nazi wrestling ; nude female karate; decapitation of a head stuck inside a plant-pot; and general depravity so virulent it's hard not to laugh along in ecstacy at this thoroughlly dopey movie.

The gore comes thick 'n' fast, as heads are crushed by cars; arms amputated (you won't believe the scene of the rival health food diner owner who has his limbs cut off, and still attempts to drive his car!); bodies hacked, and flesh devoured. The intentionally schlocky feel of the film fits perfectly, and as a tribute to exploitation epics of old, then the movie can only be applauded wholehartedly. But whatever you do don't approach this movie hoping for any degree of intellect from it, because plot characterisation, and seriousness go out of the window in favour of pure unashamed blood, gore, tasteless humour and sick situations.....who could ask for more?

- STEVE CHAMBERS.

LAST WORD.

So ends the first of the new-look W.S's, what did you think? (If you're reading this from the back, then you're in for a surprise, and God, did you really fall for that false back cover?) I didn't mention it in the editorial, but we will be attempting to get back to the glossy format in the future, but for now, I hope you can make do with this style, please let me know? Anyway, we'll be back around Christmas if time permits.

EN HILL.

No. 5

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